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S T A M P S O F I N D I A C O L L E C T O R S C O M P A N I O N

The First, Free & Only Email Newsletter on Philately, Postal History, & Postal Services of India.

AWARDS: Silver Medal with 'Felicitations of the Jury' at BELGICA 2001 World Stamp Exhibition

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# 53, January 31, 2002. Edited by Madhukar and Savita Jhingan. Published Every Thursday  
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I N T H I S I S S U E

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Research Notes – India Post In The Year 1873

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JHINGANS JOTTINGS

Hi

“Stamps, like any other tangible asset into which man may convert his wealth, must be left behind him when he dies. From the actual collection his heirs ... will benefit, but the accumulated store of knowledge derived from a lifelong study of philately cannot be bequeathed by a clause in a will. If, therefore, a student of philately is to give to posterity the benefit of his knowledge, he must commit it to paper while it is within his power so to do. Many students do pass on to the philatelic world the benefit of their researches, in the shape of monographs and articles. Many more there are, alas, of students with accumulated stores of knowledge, who have added not one iota to the permanent records of their subject. To each of you who have some grain of original philatelic information at his disposal these words are addressed: SET IT DOWN ON PAPER NOW FOR PUBLICATION. By so doing you will benefit philately in general and your own collection; and your name will be added to the long roll of philatelic luminaries who have thrown light in dark places.”

The above is sourced from the editorial of the first issue of 'Philately from Australia' that was reproduced in 'The Stamp Lover' June-July 1950, from where it was reproduced in 'Postal Order News' October 2001 issue.

OOPS!

Prashant Pandya of Vadodara topped the Postal Stationery class by winning the LARGE Vermeil with Special Prize for 'British India Postal Stationery'. In our report 'Awards at INPEX-EMPIREPEX 2001' in the last issue the award was erroneously stated as Vermeil with Special Prize. We are sorry about that.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The Stamps of India site at present is available only at its alternate location www.geocities.com/mjhingan. This is a temporary arrangement till we finalize plans for hosting at stampsofindia.com. All our other web sites are off air and we do hope to get them operational as soon as possible. Please use the Email address mjhingan@yahoo.com in place of all stampsofindia.com or stampsofindia.net addresses. Also please make a note of our new mailing address and telephone numbers at the bottom of this newsletter

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

- M&SJ

Our thanks to the Contributors to this issue: Press Information Bureau - Government of India, New Delhi; Prashant Pandya, Vadodara; Les Winick, USA;

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NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

FIP PHILATELIC WEB SITE EVALUATION RESULTS

"Post Office in Paradise - Hawaii (USA)" <http://www.hawaiianstamps.com/> won the top honours 'the Best Philatelic Web Site' at the annual FIP Philatelic Web Site Evaluation results announced at HAFNIA 2001 in October 2001. India's sole entry "Dakshina Kannada Philatelic Association" http://www.geocities.com/dakshina_kan_pa/ won the prestigious 'Top 5% Sites' award. Another entry well known to our readers "Princely States Report" of US <http://princelystates.com/> won Top 5% Sites award with a Special Prize. Our congratulations to Yoga Jappu and Ron Rice. The remaining five sites to have received 'Top 5% Sites' award are The Philatelic Computing study Group (US), Federation of the Italian Philatelic Societies (Italy), Robert A Siegel Auction Galleries (US), Vaccari (Italy), and The Virtual Stamp Album New Hebrides (Germany), the last with the Felicitations of the Jury.

There were 71 entries received for the evaluation of their sites, compared with 49 and 66 entries for 2000 and 1999 respectively. These came from 18 countries (2000 - 19, 1999 - 21). Seven accredited literature judges, plus a consultant, from six countries in Europe and North America completed the evaluation under the leadership of Francis Kiddle, Chairman of the FIP Literature Commission. The sites are listed alphabetically within each award section. Their home country is given along with the URL. Written critiques will be sent to each entrant.

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SPEEDNET SERVICE OF INDIA POST LAUNCHED

The Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Communications and Information Technology, Pramod Mahajan, has said that efficiency and accountability should be the key words while delivering customer services. Inaugurating the SpeedNet Service on January 3, 2002 at New Delhi, Mahajan said that by launching this new product, India Post has added not only efficiency but also speed and transparency and ultimately the accountability to its system. During his address, the Minister said that the India Post should work for still better customer satisfaction and efficiency so that the delivery of consignments on time is made more accountable and in case these were not delivered in time, the service should be rendered free of cost.

SpeedNet is the on-line track and trace service that combines reliability, speed and customer friendly service that Speed Post offers. Using the thirteen digit barcode that identifies one's Speed Post consignment, this web-based technology will help keep track of one's Speed Post

and Express Post consignment from booking to delivery. All one needs to do is to log on to www.indiapost.org or www.speedpost.org and enter the barcode number at the tracking page. Instantly, one will get prompt update or one's consignment status in respect of 120 domestic destinations. People can also call their nearest Speed Post Centres to know the delivery status of the consignment, if one does not have access to internet. All this comes at no extra cost.

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#### CONVERGENCE HAS ARRIVED

The Indian government announced on December 22, 2001 the merger of the ministries of information technology and communications. The new merged ministry will have three departments, the posts, information technology and telecom. The new name of the merged ministry is the Ministry of Communications & Information Technology that will have common policy, planning and implementation divisions, while the finance divisions would continue to remain separate. There would be a unified research and development wing, one National Advisory Committee and one Consultative Committee. The move is expected to make it easier for the government to effectively manage the convergence related issues.

However, Minister, Pramod Mahajan has ruled out an immediate merger of the information and broadcasting ministry in line with the Communications Convergence Bill that seeks to have a super regulator for broadcasting, Internet and telecommunications. According to him, the I&B ministry cannot merge with that of communications and IT till the time Prasar Bharati (national television network) becomes truly autonomous of the I&B ministry and a final decision on the status of the 40,000-odd Prasar Bharati employees is taken. The union cabinet cleared in August the introduction of a convergence bill to set up a new watchdog body to oversee the Internet, broadcasting and telecommunications and ensure orderly regulation.

The Communication Convergence Bill, 2001 on August 31, 2001 was introduced in the parliament by then Minister of Communications, Ram Vilas Paswan. The Bill is based on Government's acceptance of the recommendations made by the Group on Telecom and IT Convergence constituted by Government under Finance Minister's chairmanship, which had setup a Sub-Group on Convergence under the chairmanship of eminent jurist and Member of Parliament, Fali S Nariman. The recommendations were finalized after detailed discussions and after taking into account the large number of comments received through various fora including apex industry associations, thus making it a very transparent exercise.

The Bill is a landmark legislation that seeks to put in position a well-conceived structural mechanism to deal with the emerging scenario of convergence in the telecom, IT and broadcasting sectors. It will set up a 'Super Regulator' consisting of a Chairperson, an ex-officio Member to be known as the Spectrum Manager, and not more than ten other Members, with wide ranging objectives, powers, duties and functions. This 'Super Regulator' will be given licensing and registration powers which are currently with Government, and will look at both the carriage as well as the content aspects of communications (including broadcasting, telecommunication and multi-media) for which special provisions are being made by way of specifying that half the members of the Regulator will be appointed from persons of eminence in the fields of literature, performing arts, media, culture, education, films etc. The Regulator, to be known as the 'Communications Commission of India' (CCI), will also set up a panel from amongst these members to look at content related issues. Other fields from which the balance Members of the CCI will be chosen include telecommunications, broadcasting technology, information technology etc.

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INDIA UAE COOPERATION IN POSTAL SERVICES

India and the UAE have signed a key agreement on co-operation in postal sector establishing among other things an express post international service between the two countries and positioning Dubai as hub for parcels from India to Gulf countries. Director-General of India Post, BN Som, who was leading a high-level official delegation to Dubai, and Director-General of Emirates Post, Abdullah al Daboos on December 24, 2001, signed the wide-ranging agreement.

The agreement envisages a mutual arrangement whereby the UAE will serve as the hub for all mails from India to all the Gulf states as well as Iran, while India will be the hub for all mails from the UAE to the countries in the sub-continent. The details are being worked out and the agreement will become operational soon. The accord follows discussions with Abdullah al Daboos when he visited India in July. Som also met Ahmed Humaid al Tayer, UAE Minister of Communications and Chairman of Emirates Post, during his current visit. The focus of the agreement will be on the parcels business and setting up of an express post international service between India and the UAE, as well as training of UAE postal personnel in India's postal IT labs, which provide training to postal officials from all over the world, he said. A high-level team from the UAE will be visiting India next month to work out details for training of their postal personnel in IT, an area where India is well covered with regard to postal services, Som said. Tie-ups with other Gulf States will also be looked at in the future. The Gulf States are among the first three overseas markets for India Post, along with the UK and the USA. Our aim is to develop growth of business through accent on quality service and reliability, he said.

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#### INDIA, FRANCE TO FORM WORKING GROUP FOR IT, TELECOM, POSTS

India and France have agreed to form a working group to cover information technology, telecommunications and postal in line with increasing convergence the three sectors, disbanding the existing separate groups. This was decided at a meeting between Indian IT and Communication Minister Pramod Mahajan and the visiting French Trade Minister Francois Huwart on December 4, 2001 at New Delhi. Agreeing to enhance further opportunities in the IT and telecom sectors, both the ministers also reviewed the ongoing trade alliances between French and Indian companies.

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POSTAL COOPERATION WITH MAURITIUS

Tapan Sikdar, Minister of State for Communications led an official delegation to Mauritius and South Africa from November 10-16, 2001. The key objective of the visit was to synergise investment opportunities for Indian companies in South Africa and Mauritius. Sikdar is scheduled to inaugurate the India Pavilion and participate in the India Day celebrations at the ITU Telecom Africa Forum 2001 at Johannesburg.

During the first leg of his visit, Sikdar had extensive discussions with the Mauritian Minister for IT & Communications, Dilchand Jiha. Both Ministers discussed at length the proposed collaboration between the two countries regarding computerization of Mauritian Post. India Post has received a request from Republic of Mauritius Postal Services for a proposal for computerization of Mauritius Post. Mauritius Post requested for providing them a customized version of 'Meghdoot Postal Software' to computerize their postal operations including parcel services, financial services,

welfare payments and pension payments etc. apart from technical and training assistance for their staff. A techno commercial proposal was forwarded to Mauritius Post through the Department's postal desk in Telecommunication Consultants India Ltd. on August 3, 2001. The Department of Posts received the response from Mauritius Post and its proposal is under active consideration by the Technical Advisors of Mauritius Post. Both countries are likely to sign a MoU in this regard.

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INDIA POST TIES UP WITH MASTERCARD FOR LAUNCH OF PRE-PAID CARDS

In its continued efforts towards commercialization of postal services and revenue generation, the India Post entered into an agreement with MasterCard International on September 8, 2001 for launching of pre-paid electronic card that will offer consumers the flexibility and convenience of a new product. The Memorandum of Understanding was signed by Aparna Mohile, Member of Postal Services Board and J. Sannon, Senior Vice President and General Manager (South East and South Asia) of MasterCard International in the presence of the Minister of State for Communications, Tapan Sikdar at New Delhi. Sikdar said that the joining of forces with MasterCard has significance altogether different from the earlier partnerships that India Post had entered into in the last couple of months. He said that against distributing the products and services of other organizations as are envisaged in the earlier alliances, the MoU with MasterCard heralds the coming of a new product of the post office itself.

Sikdar said that in the first instance India Post will introduce a prepaid card, the first of its kind to be issued by any bank in India. Debit cards that will bring the convenience of electronic banking to the customers of the Post office Savings Bank would follow this. In the long run India Post aspires to be a major participant in the propagation of multi application smart cards as well. The alliance with MasterCard International will bring national as well as global acceptability to these modern payment solutions to be offered by India Post, he said.

The Minister regretted that despite the best intentions the benefits of modern technology have not been able to consistently reach the masses. Terming it as a universal phenomenon, Sikdar said that every country in the world today is concerned with the "Digital Divide". Stating that plastic cards are not just about convenience and security which they undoubtedly provide to the card holders, Sikdar said that from the governmental perspective they also facilitate transition of India from a primarily cash based to a cash less society. He said that printing of currency notes is both expensive as well as cumbersome apart from the country importing most of the raw material for printing of currency notes. The Minister said that popularization of plastic cards will therefore effect economy and result in import substitution.

The Director General of India Post, B N Som said that the pre-paid cards will enable the life of individuals easy and simple. He said that a number of financial organizations have approached India Post for utilization of its vast network for launching and promoting their products. Som said that India Post has initiated an aggressive restructuring drive aimed at revamping the Post Offices across the country into one-stop financial supermarkets, thus meeting all the financial and investment needs of the customers.

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INDIA POST TO ENTER LOGISTICS BUSINESS

India Post is planning major forays into the logistics business, cargo services that will provide secure transmission of goods both within India and abroad. It could be of significance, particularly

in areas like the gems and jewellery business. India Post was in talks with Container Corporation of India (CONCOR) for transportation purposes and Balmer & Laurie for air transportation as well as customs clearances. With its network and reach the department's revenue generation from logistics business would be phenomenal in the days to come. Under the plans for gems and jewellery exports, the department was thinking in terms of providing the entire logistics needs of individual exporters in this key area including customs clearance.

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~~~~~INDIA POST TO OFFER MONEY CHANGING SERVICES~~~~~

The Reserve Bank of India has given India Post the license to provide money-changing service in the country. With this, the postal department will be able to offer foreign exchange services through its 1,54,000 branches. The detailed operational plans are being formulated for introduction of the service. The move is in line with the recommendations of a five-member committee constituted by the Department of Economic Affairs in the Ministry of Finance to review the mandate of the Post Office Savings Bank.

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~~~~~INDIA POST SIGNS MOU WITH STANCHART FIN~~~~~

India Post and the product distribution arm of Standard Chartered group, Standard Chartered Finance entered into a memorandum of understanding on January 12, 2002 whereby the bank will exploit the extensive national network of post offices to distribute its financial products and will cash on 120m account holders of postal deposit. The pact will also help India Post to grow in operations in terms of Speed Post, Media Post, Data Post and e-Bill Post. India Post will get commissions on financial products distributed and marketed via post offices. India Post will be marketed and distributed through credit cards and other consumer banking products of StanChart Bank through its branch networks.

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~~~~~SOFTWARE FOR AUTOMATED POSTAL SORTING~~~~~

Pune-based Center for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) is all set to launch Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software. "What is different about our OCR software is that it will help search, sort and manage documents easily. This technology in association with a proper speech to text technology can also help a blind read books in Indian languages," executive director of C-DAC, RK Arora told. CR is a technology for the automatic conversion of image data for character into the computer codes. Some of the main application areas include automated data entry from printed text, automated forms processing, automated postal sorting on the basis of PIN codes and automated banking and other financial institutions operations.

~~~~~ALSO IN THE NEWS~~~~~

THE RING

By Les Winick

The worldwide stamp market was put into shock in July when seven stamp dealers were indicted by the States of New York, California and Maryland in the USA for bid rigging at public auctions since the early 1980s. The defendants named in the civil lawsuit are: Anthony Feldman (UK); John Apfelbaum, Earl P.L.Apfelbaum, Inc. (USA); Davitt Felder, Davitt Felder, Inc. (USA); Stephen Osborne (UK); Dana Okey (USA); Etienne de Cherisey (France) and Kees Quirlijns (The Netherlands). There are one and perhaps more additional U.S. dealers who performed acts as part of the defendants' conspiracy, but cooperated with the district attorneys of the three states, and are not named in the indictment.

The three states are seeking treble damages, restitution, disgorgement (to give up something illegally obtained), compensation for the group's victims, and civil penalties in addition to injunctive relief. An interesting statement made as part of the indictment is that "Stamp dealing also constitutes a profitable business, accounting for nearly \$1 billion dollars in the United States sales in 2000 alone. Over \$150 million worth of those stamps were sold at public auctions." The indictment goes on to state that usually less than 100 individuals bid at an auction, with no more than two or three significant bidders on many lots. The absence of one or two individuals from a particular auction can have an impact on the sold prices of any lot.

The Ring devised a pay-off scheme, whereby the individuals who did not compete with the "winning" Ring member received a part of the money taken from sellers. Tony Feldman calculated each member's share of that money according to a pre-set formula, and sent out a tally sheet for each auction detailing pay-offs the Ring members needed to make, or the amount of money they were entitled to receive from other Ring members. The price reduction was divided equally, known as the "European method," among those who had bid at the secret auction. Assume that four Ring members, A, B, C and D bid \$3,000, \$5,000, \$7,000 and \$8,000 respectively for a certain lot at their secret auction prior to the public auction. The lot sold for \$4,000 at the public auction to Bidder D.

Here is how the pay-off worked: Bidder A would receive nothing because his bid was below the eventual purchase price. Each remaining dealer bid at least \$5,000, so the first \$1,000 of price reduction (\$5,000 minus \$4,000) was divided evenly among the three top bidders. Bidders C and D secretly bid up to \$7,000 so the next \$2000 was divided among them only. Therefore bidder B received \$333, Bidder C received \$333 plus \$1,000, and Bidder D kept the gains of \$1,333. This was changed to the "American method," which gave a greater share of the illegal gains to the winning bidder. Using the same example, bidder D would pay 50% of the first \$1,000 in price reduction to bidders B and C (\$250 each), and pay an additional 50% of the next \$2,000 to Bidder C. Bidder D retained \$1,333 via the European system and \$1,500 via the American system. The real savings were in the reality that bidder D did not have to compete against his fellow dealers who were interested in that certain lot, and may have had to pay more than his estimate of \$8,000.

In the 18 months of investigation, the legal authorities people were very thorough. The government investigators checked the bidding records of every auction house named in the indictment, as well as who was present in the audience, even if they did not bid. This was done through the registration listing for the auction paddle numbers at the auction. The conclusion reached by the investigators was that the actions of the defendants had an effect on interstate and foreign commerce.

The three states demanded a jury trial, a dollar amount equal to three times the damages proven at trial, an unspecified amount for violations of the laws of the three states, civil penalties against each individual defendant, awarding damages, disgorgement and/or restitution, forbidding the defendants to engage in any activity similar to the anti-competitive actions described, and awarding the three states their costs of this action, including attorney's fees and expert fees, and granting any other relief as may be just and proper. There has been no trial date established as yet.

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RESEARCH NOTES

Manohar Lal, our Research Coordinator, is fully consumed researching Currency Notes at the National Archives of India; hence 'Notes on Pakistan' has to have a break. We will carry on the notes on various other subjects nevertheless.

INDIA POST IN THE YEAR 1873, Part 1

POSTAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that correspondence for Zanzibar forwarded *via* Bombay to Aden by the Mail Steamers of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company and thence by the British India Steam Navigation Company's vessels, is chargeable at the same rates as correspondence for Aden; *but all such correspondence must be fully prepaid.*

2. A continuation of the same line of communication from Zanzibar to Mozambique, Delagoa Bay, Natal and the Cape of Good Hope, will come into force in March next, and correspondence may be sent thereby *via* Bombay, commencing with the Mail Steamer leaving Bombay on the 17th February. Correspondence for these places is subject to the same rates and conditions as prescribed above for Zanzibar.

3. The dates of departure for Mails from Bombay for the above-mentioned places have been included in the Mail Steamer Calendar published this day under separate notice.

- A M Monteath, Director General of the Post Office of India. Calcutta; The 22nd January 1873

POSTAL NOTICE

Consequent upon an alteration of the rates of postage chargeable upon letters passing between the United Kingdom and Newfoundland, the rates chargeable in India on letters for Newfoundland have been reduced from 12 to 10 annas per ½ oz. (*viâ* Brindisi) and from 10 to 8 annas per ½ oz. (*viâ* Southampton), the reduced rates being the same as those already prescribed for letters to Canada.

- A M Monteath, Director General of the Post Office of India. Calcutta; The 23rd January 1873

POSTAL NOTICE

Consequent upon the establishment of a British Post Office at Smyrna, correspondence may now be sent to that place at the following rates: -

Correspondence for Smyrna via Bombay through British Post Office, Alexandria.

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Newspapers – not exceeding 4 oz., 1 anna 4 pie.

Packets of Books and Patterns –

Not exceeding 1 oz., 1 anna 4 pie.

Exceeding 1 oz., and not exceeding 2 oz., 2 annas 8 pie.

Exceeding 2 oz., and not exceeding 4 oz., 4 annas.

Every additional 4 oz., or fractions thereof, 4 annas.

Letters for Smyrna can be registered by the above-mentioned route on payment of a fee of 8 annas.

The pre-payment of letters is optional, and that of newspapers, books, and patterns compulsory.

- F. R. Hogg, Officiating Director General of the Post Office of India. Calcutta; 28th February 1873

To be continued ...

ASK US

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