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----- STAMPS OF INDIA COLLECTORS COMPANION -----
The First, Free & 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 # 97 - December 26, 2002. Published Every Thursday
Edited by Madhukar and Savita Jhingan

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I N T H I S I S S U E

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Latest on INPEX 02
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If you've found this newsletter useful, recommend it to a friend.  
Better still forward a copy of this issue.

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JHINGANS JOTTINGS

Hi

We wish you a very Happy and prosperous and peaceful New Year 2003.

Our New Year resolution is to provide more original research in the
newsletter in the year 2003.

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

- M&SJ

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Our thanks to the Contributors and sources to this issue: Vijay Seth  
from New Delhi, Delhi Mid Day, Outlook, The Hindu, The Hindu Business  
Line, and Press Information Bureau of Government of India.

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Mention this newsletter when contacting other philatelists

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NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

LATEST ON INPEX 02

India Post has posted the complete text of their letter to the organizers of INPEX 02, on their web site [www.indiapost.org](http://www.indiapost.org) that exposes the hollowness of organizers claim of 'unavoidable circumstances beyond our control'.

"An Important Announcement Regarding INPEX 2002 Philately Exhibition"  
The Department has been receiving many queries regarding the status of the INPEX 2002 philatelic exhibition and the Department's role in the same. It is therefore decided to place before the public a relevant letter, which was issued to the organizers of the said exhibition. The letter is self-explanatory and clarifies the Department's position in the matter.

No.3-7/2001-Phil.  
Government of India  
Ministry of Communications & IT  
Department of Posts  
Dak Bhawan, Sansad Marg  
New Delhi-110001.

Dated: 13.12.2002

To  
Shri Sahadeva Sahoo  
Immediate Past President, Philatelic Congress of India  
(PCI Co-ordinator , INPEX\_2002)  
Vice-Chancellor's Bungalow, OUAT  
Bhubaneshwar-751 003.

Subject: INPEX 2002 Philatelic Exhibition.

Sir,  
Kindly refer to earlier correspondences and discussions on the above subject. It was amply clarified that the Department of Posts is not in a position to support the said exhibition. However, it is seen from the official website of the exhibition that:

- 1) There is an insertion which states that the exhibition has the patronage of the Department of Posts.
- 2) It is mentioned that the exhibition 'creates a setting for the postal administration' to 'promote their products and business'.
- 3) It is stated that the Department of Posts is releasing four special postage stamps and a miniature sheet to commemorate the event.
- 4) Another statement is that Plans are underway to conduct the last commemorative flight of the Pigeon Post.
- 5) The website has even gone to the extent of carrying pictures that are claimed to be facsimiles of stamps, mini-sheet etc. of the Government of India.

6) The picture of a postage stamp has been used in the logo of the exhibition without taking prior permission of the Department.

We are constrained to inform you that the above-mentioned contents are unacceptable to this Department. Persisting with the same even months after the Department's stand in the matter was clarified is highly irresponsible and raises suspicions of ulterior motives. The point at serial (5) above is of particularly serious nature as publicizing pictures of such fake postage stamps is a criminal offense.

In the circumstances, you may consider taking the following steps:

a) The above contents listed (1) to (6) may be removed from the website forthwith and an apology may be inserted prominently for carrying misleading information. This insertion should be unambiguously worded and should bring out clearly that the Department of Posts is not associated with the exhibition in any manner.

b) All printed material containing such misleading information as listed at serials (1) to (6) may immediately be withdrawn. A suitable communication clarifying the position and expressing regret for the misleading information circulated earlier may be brought out immediately. This communication should be circulated to the participants and all other concerned persons to whom material containing the said misleading information was forwarded earlier.

c) Steps may also be taken to ensure that no material like posters, banners etc. are issued which contains such wrong information.

It may be recollected that consequent to your earnest requests, the Department was considering the matter of providing philatelic frames for the exhibition favourably. However, in view of the above developments, the final decision in the matter is being deferred. The issue will be taken up for consideration again after a report of compliance on the three points mentioned above at (a) to (c) is received.

Yours sincerely,

Signed

(P. N. Ranjit Kumar)

Asstt. Director General (Philately)"

The natural course of action should have been providing the report of compliance on the three points as desired by India Post and hold the show as scheduled. But the organizers of the exhibition and the powers that be at PCI are jeopardizing the future of philately in India for petty immediate personal gains.

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NEW ISSUE UPDATE

India Post has scheduled two issues on December 31, 2002.

A commemorative stamp on T T Krishnamachari in the denomination of Rs. 5 shall be produced in the quantity of 400,000 in sheets of 48.

A set of two stamps on Forts of Andhra Pradesh - Golconda and Chandragiri, in the denomination of Rs. 5 each, shall be produced in the quantity of 3 million in sheets of 27.

These issues along with the First Day Cover and the information sheet, at Rs. 2 each, shall be available on sale at nearly 1000 selected Post Offices including all Philatelic Bureaus and Counters.

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HIGH TECH POSTAL STATIONERY

The post card with an advertisement of 'Employees Provident Fund' issued on December 21, 2002 heralded a new hi-tech age for postal stationery of India. The postcard is printed by India security Press of Nashik Road in the quantity of 1 million in strips of 4 cards.

The imprinted stamps design on its right has a barcode that tells the automatic letter sorting machine about the type of stationery and the amount of postage paid. And space has been provided for magnetic ink character recognition (MICR) technology, similar to cheques and postal orders, to aid sorting by machine.

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NEW STAMPS RELEASED

ANGLO BENGALI INTER COLLEGE ALLAHABAD

India Post released a commemorative postage stamp on Anglo Bengali Inter College Allahabad on December 23, 2002.

The stamp is in the denomination of Rs. 5, the inland letter rate. Monika Khanna Gulati designed the stamp. Alka Sharma designed the First Day Cover, priced at Rs. 2, and the pictorial first day postmark. Information Sheet containing write-up and technical data and priced at Rs. 2 was issued on the occasion.

Calcutta Security Printers Limited of Kanpur printed the stamps by photo Offset in five colors on Matt Chromo paper in the quantity of 0.8 million in sheets of 40 stamps.

GURUKUL KANGRI VISHWAVIDYALAYA HARDWAR

Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the Prime Minister of India released a commemorative postage stamp on Gurukul Kangri Vishwavidyalaya Hardwar on December 24, 2002 at a special function held at New Delhi.

The Vishwavidyalaya, a deemed University draws its intellectual sustenance from the teachings of Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati, the great socio-religious reformer of the 19th century, who emphasized the importance of quality education and exhorted that the society is duty-bound to provide appropriate education to its children. Swami Shradhanand, an immediate disciple of the Maharishi who was inspired by his ideas, paved the way for the Gurukula Kangri Vishwavidyalaya by establishing the first gurukula of the modern age in 1902 at Kangri village near Hardwar.

The stamp is in the denomination of Rs. 5, the inland letter rate. Kamleshwar Singh designed the stamp and the First Day Cover, priced at Rs. 2. Alka Sharma designed the pictorial first day postmark. Information Sheet containing write-up and technical data and priced at Rs. 2 was issued on the occasion.

Calcutta Security Printers Limited of Kanpur printed the stamps by photo Offset in four colors on Matt Chromo paper in the quantity of 0.8 million in sheets of 40 stamps.

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PCI CASES UPDATE

The suit filed by Madhukar Jhingan against PCI was rescheduled from December 20 to February 26, 2003 as the Civil Judge was on leave.

The suit filed by Rajesh Varma against PCI and others was rescheduled from December 19 to December 23, 2002 as the Civil Judge was on leave that day. On December 23 it was rescheduled for January 2, 2003 for the same reason.

NEW SPECIAL POSTMARKS

India Post provided a special postmark to commemorate the platinum jubilee of the All India Women's Conference at New Delhi on December 20, 2002. A special cover was also released on this occasion.

FORTHCOMING EXHIBITIONS

RURAPEX 1000

Karnatka Rural Philatelic Association, Melur is organizing a World Rural Stamp Exhibition on January 26 and 27, 2003.

PHILATELY AT JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY

The first Philatelic Course in Jadavpur University was inaugurated with the lecture of Dipok Dey on "An Outline History of Communication" from early dawn of civilization to 1840(stamp period). Eleven students attended class on the first day.

Tilak De, Director Kolkata GPO and Course Coordinator was present with other prominent philatelists S C Sukhani, Madhukar Deogawanka, Dr. Prabir Laha and Basudev Ganguli.

SPECIAL COUNTERS FOR GREETINGS MAIL

Special counters are being set up in 33 post offices in the national capital for collection, sorting, transmission and expeditious delivery of Christmas and New Year greeting mail.

The counters in the post offices, spread in all districts, would be operational from December 20 till January 5 next year. This would help in delivery of the greeting cards without any delay.

The special counters use a special postmark with 'GREETINGS' in it.

SANTA CLAUS DELIVERS MAIL IN DARJEELING

Postmen dressed as Santa Claus are delivering cards, cakes, and gifts for four days from December 22, 2002 between 6 pm and midnight in Darjeeling Head post office zone in North Bengal. The charges for delivery of a card is Rs. 20, and for a cake Rs. 50. The sender can also order a cake of his choice with post office. The delivery will be made on the same day as the booking.

John Samuel, Post Master General of North Bengal & Sikkim came up with this novel idea.

NEW SERVICES IN KERALA

The Kerala Postal Circle is getting into an overdrive offering a number of special services for the public during the Christmas-New Year festive season, which also coincides with the peak pilgrim season at the hill shrine of Sabarimala.

India Post is delivering Sabarimala prasadam to the doorstep of the Ayyappa devotees through a tie-up with the Travancore Devaswom Board on November 29, 2002. Over 5,000 devotees had so far availed of this facility. The scheme will continue till January 10th next year.

Christmas and New Year bouquets and cakes too could be sent through Speed Post in Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi and Kozhikode. The cost of one kilogram of cake with royal icing, baked by reputed bakers, was fixed at Rs. 200, inclusive of postal charges. A flower arrangement, comprising seven rose flowers, will cost Rs 65 with dispatch.

The sale of Kerala Public Service Commission's (KPSC) application forms at Rs 10 each would henceforth be done only through the post offices in the State. The application forms for the Common Entrance Examinations for 2003 too would be available at all post offices in the State, in addition to eight post offices in other States.

India Post also made a tie-up with the Reserve Bank of India's Thiruvananthapuram regional office for distribution of coins through post offices. In the first phase, this facility would be available at the General Post Office, Chalai post office and Medical College post office in Thiruvananthapuram.

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POSTAGE STAMPS STOLEN IN TRANSIT

With the arrest of five people, including a Postal Department employee, Delhi police on December 20, 2002 claimed to have busted a postage stamp racket and recovered stamps worth Rs 161,000.

Two members of the gang, which stole postage stamps worth Rs 736,000 from a railway station here, were caught red-handed near Azadpur area in North Delhi following a trap laid by police, ACP North-West R S Yadav told reporters.

The duo, identified as Rajender Rana and Vishal Dabas were arrested as they reached Azadpur to sell stolen stamps worth Rs 30,000. The police also nabbed Jawahar Lal, Vijay Dahiya and Vinod Verma on the basis of information divulged by them.

Yadav informed that Dabas stole a bag of postal stamps from Sarai Rohilla railway station on November 28 in connivance with Rana - a Postal Department driver, who had specially got his duty changed from cash van to parcel van. Rana had earlier been suspended after being arrested on charges of stealing postal drafts.

The stamps were sold to Dahiya and Verma who further sold the same to Jawahar Lal - a commission agent of Speed Post in Azadpur, the ACP said. Further interrogation of the accused was on, he added.

The consignment of stamps was on its way from the Central Stamp Depot Kanpur to Jodhpur GPO. At New Delhi railway station it was loaded in the truck for another railway station in the City, Sarai Rohilla for onward transmission.

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VIEWS & OPINIONS

Thanks to our ever vigilant readers for pointing out that the name of G Madan Mohan Das, a member of PCI Governing Council and the national commissioner to PHILAKOREA 2002 world stamp exhibition, who was detained on August 13, 2002 by the Customs at the Chennai Airport was left out in the Part 38 of this column in the previous issue.

We think it is a good opportunity to revisit the story of Das. PCI Governing Council appointed Das as the national commissioner for PHILAKOREA 02 on April 28, 2002. However Das, with the blessings of those who control PCI, was acting as the national commissioner for PHILAKOREA 02 for over one year before that date.

Yours truly have personally been obtaining the Temporary Export Permit (TEP) from Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) for majority of national commissioners in the last decade. On two occasions once in 1996 and another in 2000 this entailed obtaining a waiver of Government of India procedures and guidelines under which it was impossible for any exhibit to be sent abroad for participation. Yours truly has freely shared his knowledge and experience and trained several other local philatelists in this work. This is a thankless job and we have spent our own money (even for long distance calling to the national commissioner), time and energy for a good cause. The persons who control the PCI reward their favorites financially by paying from PCI funds or allowing them to charge any amount from the exhibitors on account of obtaining ASI's permit. Yours truly have neither claimed nor accepted any funds on this account.

The officers and the staff of the ASI have always cooperated by accepting our applications at the last minute instead of stipulated 2 months before deadline and processing the same by sitting late hours.

Das wrote scores of letters in 2001 and early 2002 to India Post, PCI Secretary General - Dilip Shah, PCI President - S Sahoo, and to yours truly exhorting every one to obtain for him all the necessary permissions from various departments of the Government, including the TEP from the ASI.

Das visited Delhi in March 2002 and acknowledged the help by yours truly in his letter of March 25, 2002 to PCI President. But something drastically changed between end April and end June 2002 and Das filed his application belatedly through another person with ASI.

However we still remained involved with this case as Das and his masters refused to carry the only Gold medal exhibit and communicated as such to ASI. And this particular exhibitor asked us to represent his case that we successfully did by obtaining a separate permit for him.

We wrote on July 11, 2002 to Das with a copy for information and necessary action to PCI President - S Sahoo, both by Speed Post at our own cost. Here is the complete text of that letter:

"Dear Mr. Das:

I understand that the exhibits of Mr. B K Sinha and Mr. D C Sharma participating in PHILAKOREA 2002 include antiquities. I request you to please include the above in your application to Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) for grant of a Temporary Export Permit (TEP) in order to avoid the confiscation of exhibits and other penalties under Antiquities and Art Treasures Act 1972.

Mr. Ajay Kumar Mittal as National Commissioner for PHILANIPPON 2001 did not include the exhibit of Mr. A M Mollah that contained antiquities. Mr. Dilip Shah carried that exhibit to Tokyo without TEP from ASI. This is now part of ongoing investigations against Mr. Shah by the CBI. Let us learn from our mistakes and try not to repeat them. With warm personal regards,  
Yours sincerely"

We spoke at length to Sinha, again at our own cost, about this. He then tried to include his exhibit for the ASI clearance and requested his mentor and PCI President to intervene on his behalf with ASI and issue him a separate TEP or to add his name in the application made by Das. The PCI President obliged Sinha. Yours truly attempted to contact D C Sharma but he did not respond to calls and we later learned that he was advised not to talk to us.

Finally Das carried 10 exhibits to Korea that contained antiquities and thus requiring the TEP from the ASI. Das however obtained the Permit in respect of only 7 exhibits and carried 3 without the Permit.

At Seoul we found to our horror that there were antiquities in two other exhibits as well and Das had carried these without the necessary ASI permit. We also noticed the crude attempt by Sharma in his exhibit to camouflage the antiquities by pasting small white slips on the dates in the write-up. These violations by Das were discussed with several persons including other Indians at PHILAKOREA.

Das was detained while returning from Seoul on August 13, 2002 by the Customs at the Chennai Airport for violations under Antiquities & Art Treasures Act.

Das was able to go home after about 24 hours at the airport leaving behind all the exhibits in the custody of the customs. The exhibits are still with the authorities after four months and it is not known when these will be released. It also not known the steps the PCI has taken, if any, in this direction.

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READERS FORUM

<Dear Reader, Your feedback is important to us as it helps evolve the newsletter. We strive hard to bring you comprehensive coverage of the latest on Indian philately and improve with every issue. Please do let us have your thoughts and suggestions. We also would like to learn how our newsletter impacts your collecting and the value you feel it provides to you. Do send in your comments, views, reports, articles and other features for publication>

R P OSWAL FROM LUDHIANA oswalindldh@satyam.net.in
Stamps on Prince William's 21st Birthday are being issued in June 2003. We would like to know the definition of Omnibus and which are states/colonies/ protectorates that fall under Omnibus issues? We like to know what are the sources of getting any stamps issued as an omnibus at one place so that we do not miss to procure the same. Which are the states and protectorates that issue British Royal Family Stamps?

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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

MAIL RUNNERS IN HIMALAYAS

At a time when e-mail threatens to banish the postman to the museum, mail-runners are still the only means of communication in remote regions of the north Indian mountain state of Himachal Pradesh. Called 'Harkara' the khaki-clad mail-runners armed with a staff, bell and mailbag are a welcome sight in scores of isolated villages of the region bordering Tibet.

The runners cover long distances on foot across deep valleys, gushing rivers and snow-smearred mountains, and brave heavy snow and avalanches to keep lines of communication open. "The runners' job isn't over with just mail delivery," said 80-year-old Sukh Das, who has been delivering mail between villages for decades. "He is also the roving reporter, the carrier of news from one village to another and it is not uncommon for him to be an adviser to the tribals in the regions of Lahaul Spiti, Kinnaur, Pangi or Dodra-Kawar," Das said. Das said runners are popular in villages because often they help tribes people read or write letters and even advise them on various issues.

Even heavy snow that cuts off parts of Himachal Pradesh for more than half the year does not deter the mail-runners who dig themselves paths, officials said. "Their territory begins where motorable roads ends," said an official from the state's postal department in the provincial capital of Shimla, India's most popular summer resort. "Without their services mail may never be delivered in several villages perched atop ridges or hidden in icy mountains," another official said, adding the harkara's even deliver to Hindu holy men meditating in caves.

Vijay Bhushan, Himachal Pradesh's chief postmaster-general, said only a few of the runners were full-time employees of the state-run postal department. "There are 1,719 mail runners in the state and of which only 65 are working as full-time employees, while the rest are part-timers," he said. Bhushan admitted the job could be dangerous. "It is not unusual for some of them to be buried in avalanches in the high mountains," the department chief said. He did not give details of their wages or working hours but admitted the runners were bottom in the postal department's pecking order.

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ASK US

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

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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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CONTRIBUTORS INVITED

We require regular correspondents everywhere in India to cover the philatelic activities in their area. We shall reimburse the costs of photos, covers, publications, courier and other charges. All contributions shall be acknowledged.

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WEB SITE UPDATES

STAMPSOFINDIA

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.

Updated Segments This Week: News, Articles,

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

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

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Apartment 49-D, Block BG-5, Paschim Vihar, New Delhi 110 063 India
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