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

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I N T H I S I S S U E

Collectors Pack 2002 Now Available
New Special Postmarks
Army Postal Service Issues
Recent & Forthcoming Events
Baroda Philatelic Society AGM
Post-offices to Drive Cyber Age Growth
Fake Stamps Scam at Hyderabad
Fake Stamp Racket Busted In Delhi
Pune Mumbai Fake Stamp Case Update
The Calendar of Worldwide Philatelic Auctions
Philately in Transition in India, Part 55
Also in the News - \$20,000 Stamp for Space Mail

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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 regret the delay not only in mailing this issue but also for not
being able to update the website for over one month now.

The normal schedule of updating our site is once a week after the weekly
newsletter is mailed out and usually it gets updated twice a week. We
hope to resume the weekly updating as soon as possible.

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

- M&SJ

Our thanks to the Contributors and Sources to this issue: Financial Express and Times of India.

Please mention this newsletter when contacting other philatelists.

The Advertising Supplement to 'Stamps of India Collectors Companion' is now available on-line <http://www.stampsofindia.com/Content/Ads/ads.htm>

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

COLLECTORS PACK 2002 NOW AVAILABLE

India Post released the Collectors Pack containing commemorative and special stamps issued during 2002 in mint singles at Rs.360. The pack contains a total of 54 stamps with a face value of Rs.314. The packs are available at all philatelic bureaus in the country.

NEW SPECIAL POSTMARKS

India Post issued a special postmark and special cover to mark World Intellectual Property Day on April 28, 2003 at New Delhi. The cover priced at Rs. 7 is available at the Philatelic Bureau, Parliament Street, New Delhi 110001.

ARMY POSTAL SERVICE ISSUES

The Army Postal Service issued the following Special Covers with Special Postmarks in 2002 after our report in Issue # 65 of May 16, 2002:

November 14, 2002

The Assam Regiment, Diamond Jubilee & 8th Reunion

November 15, 2002

Third Battalion The Rajput Regiment, 225th Raising Day

November 23, 2002

Paratroopers Training School Indian Air Force, Diamond Jubilee

November 26, 2002

Jammu & Kashmir Rifles, 9th Reunion

December 9, 2002

Indian Military Academy, 70th Anniversary

December 22, 2002

Parachute Regiment, Golden Jubilee

Civilians may order these covers at Rs.10 each thru the nearest philatelic bureau.

RECENT & FORTHCOMING EXHIBITIONS

MALWAPEX

India Post organized a district level philatelic exhibition at Ujjain on March 28 and 29, 2003.

For a list of exhibition held this year, please visit

<http://www.stampsofindia.com/Content/Events/a300.htm>

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BARODA PHILATELIC SOCIETY AGM

The 28th Annual General Body Meeting of Baroda Philatelic Society was held on March 9, 2003. President R P Shah was in the Chair and the Annual Report and Audited Statement of Accounts for 2002 were passed unanimously after certain clarification.

There were no nominations for the Governing council election for the year 2003. Following were nominated unanimously for the Governing council for the year 2003: President - Prashant H Pandya, Vice President - Dr. Y T Chandarana, Honorary Secretary - Timir R Shah, Joint Secretary Abhay U Mandey, Honorary Treasurer - Dinesh T Desai, Librarian - Kalidas H. Kachhia, Members - Vikram S Talati, & Kaushik M Choksey, Office coordinator - Parul H Shah, Internal Auditors - Ashwin C Shah, & Dr. Arun Arya.

Society's monthly meeting is held on every second Sunday of the month at Dr. Ashwin Patel's Nursing Home, Near Tarkeshwar Temple, opposite Singapore Market, Jubilee Baug, Vadodara, at 9.30 AM and the Dr. Ashwin Patel Memorial Philatelic Library remains open on every Sunday between 10 AM to 12 Noon.

The membership is restricted to residents of Vadodara district and Associate Membership is open to all. The Annual Membership Fees are Rs.100 with an Admission Fee of Rs.50. For more information contact Timir R. Shah, Secretary, Baroda Philatelic Society, 'Jaya', Dala Patel's Pole, Narsinhji's Pole, Vadodara, 390001 [vadophil@ipipi.com](mailto:vadophil@ipipi.com)

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POST-OFFICES TO DRIVE CYBER AGE GROWTH

Post offices – better known as snail mail in today's world of internet and courier services – may be back in fashion soon. Corporate biggies such as Reliance, Satyam and GTL are looking at using India Post's network of 154,900 post-offices as the most efficient vehicle to bring communication revolution in India.

"Indian companies are looking at a reliable infrastructure network which reaches out to the nook and corner of the country. Post-offices are at the top of their mind as a means to take information technology (IT) and telecom services to the masses," a Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) official told FE.

FICCI is helping companies conceptualize and evolve a mechanism to translate the concept into reality. "We help in organizing interface between the government agencies including Department of Posts (DoP) and the industry. One such meeting is scheduled for Saturday, April 26, 2003" he said.

Companies including Nokia, Airtel Digilink, Hutch, Tata Teleservices, GTL, HFCL, TCS and TCIL along with senior officials from DoP, Department of Information Technology (DIT) and Telecom Regulatory Authority of India are meeting in Capital on Saturday April 26 to discuss various practical issues pertaining to communication including the fate of the Convergence Bill, he added.

He said that even DoP is taking steps to gear up the old postal system to face the competition of the cyber age. The Ministry of Communication and Information Technology is quite open and receptive about the new idea, he said adding that post-offices have already been successful as the largest banker of the rural population with a network of post-offices of which over 90 per cent belong to rural areas. The postal department transacts business of over Rs.3.5 billion and has employee strength of about 590,000.

Elaborating on Saturday's programme, he said, the meeting will also be attended by a 27-member South African business delegation led by its Minister of Communications Dr Ivy Matsepe-Casaburri. "The delegation, which is represented by South African postal agency, is interested in understanding the multi-dimensional role of the Indian postal department. In that country, postal department is confined to its basic role only," he said adding that companies from both sides are also interested to have strategic tie-ups for better and wider reach to their services.

The South African delegation includes its chief director, broadcasting, Thembekile Ndlovu, National Commission on Information Society & Development president Lyndall Shope-Mafole, Institute for Satellite and Software Application director Traveen Rabindhath, Gijima Information Technologies executive director Thoko Mnyango, Prevetel Holdings CEO Bungene Kekane and Sentech CEO S Mokone-Matabane.

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FAKE STAMPS SCAM AT HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad city police on April 13, 2003 said they have busted an interstate fake stamps racket with the arrest of five suspects at Secunderabad. Police also identified 14 more suspects involved in the racket who are yet to be arrested. Additional commissioner of police A K Khan said there may be a nationwide network of the racket.

Counterfeit non-judicial stamps, court fee stamps, welfare stamps and recycled postal stamps worth Rs.350,000 were seized from the arrested, while Rs.1 million worth fake stamps have already been pumped into the market in the state, the police said.

At a press conference, Khan said the arrested have been identified as A Venkateshwara Rao of Old Alwal, A Ram Mohan Rao of Eluru, D Venkateswar Rao of Prakasam, S Ramesh Babu of Hyderabad and Mohammed Hakim of Kolkata.

D Venkateswar Rao is the kingpin in the gang and Mohammed Hakim had come to supply the fake stamps, the additional commissioner said. It is difficult to differentiate between the original and a duplicate stamp, the police said.

However, fake stamps lack key security features available in the originals. There are dimensional instabilities like the size of the design and other security features, Khan said.

Hakim disclosed the names of the main suppliers of fake stamps – Isha Biswas, Ramayan and Imtiyaz, all residents of Kolkata. A special team would be sent to arrest them, Khan said.

Teams are being sent to various districts in the state to nab the associates of Venkateswar Rao. Two of his associates – A Rama Krishna of Prakasam and A Srinivasa Rao of Guntur monitoring the unlawful activities in the central coastal area are yet to be arrested.

Sometime back a big fake stamps racket was uncovered in Maharashtra. The main accused, Karim Telgi, had pumped more than Rs 3,300 crore fake stamps into the market in many parts of the country. There may be a link between Karim and the local racket, but it can be confirmed only after questioning Biswas and his associates, Khan said. Task force deputy commissioner of police Y Gangadhar was also present.

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FAKE STAMP RACKET BUSTED IN DELHI

The economic offences wing (EOW) of Delhi Police crime branch has busted a gang involved in sale of counterfeit stamps and non-judicial stamp papers on April 26, 2003.

The EOW claimed that it has apprehended a member of the gang allegedly involved in over Rs.3 billion fake stamps racket in the country. The police has arrested one person and recovered cash amounting to Rs.493,000.

During earlier raids, the police had arrested four persons identified as Deepak, Mohammed Asif, Mohsin Azim Mulla and Mansoor who have been associated with this gang. The kingpin is lodged in a Bangalore jail, the police said.

A team has been formed to apprehend seven more suspected members of the gang. The police said one of the accused, Abdul Karim Telagi, had godowns of counterfeit stamps in and around Delhi.

In order to apprehend the accused, the police seized a number of accounts. One of the purchasers informed that they had issued cheques of State Bank of Mysore in favor of Capital Enterprises and Sharp Enterprises against the purchases.

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THE CALENDAR OF WORLDWIDE PHILATELIC AUCTIONS

The Calendar for May 2003 with detailed information and announcements is being updated and soon shall be available at <http://www.stampsofindia.com/Content/Auctions/a702.htm>

This information is provided by special arrangement with Charles E. Cwiakala updates to this information are available at their comprehensive Website [www.cwiakala.com](http://www.cwiakala.com).

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FREE ADVERTISEMENTS

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<http://www.stampsofindia.com/Content/Ads/ads.htm>

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VIEWS & OPINIONS

PHILATELY IN TRANSITION IN INDIA, Part 55

The combined issue of Signet, the quarterly journal of the Philatelic Congress of India (PCI), from October 2002 to March 2003 (six months) recently arrived and was reported in issue # 112 of April 17, 2003. Being longtime users of computers we firmly believe in the adage 'garbage in garbage out' and the garbage dished out by Sahdev Sahoo in his editorials does not deserve our comments. However we comment on the same, rather reluctantly, in the interest of philately in India.

We have been told that Sahoo is a writer of fiction in Oriya and it appears that through Signet he is trying his hand at fiction in English. We are now convinced that this publication from reporting the philately activities in India and original research on Indian Philately has become a pack of lies. In the issue dated April-June 2002 where Sahoo began his editorial with a line about 'animalistic self-aggrandizement' (whatever that may be) and then fills up space by reproducing from American Philatelist where Bob Lamb, the Executive Director of American Philatelic Society's (APS), talks about USPS relationship with collectors, members rigging auctions, procedure to deal with complaints against members.

Philatelists the world over will agree that no comparison can be made between the APS and the PCI when it comes to openness and observing democratic norms. While APS has openly dealt with the unpleasant task of its members caught rigging auctions or other crimes on several earlier occasions, the PCI has not taken any action against its members who were caught by police in fake stamp scam. Instead such persons have been on the governing council of PCI and senior PCI office bearers have patronized such persons.

The publication of lies regarding the court case against PCI in the issue dated Jul-Sep 2002 caused contempt of court and proceedings in this regard are going on. Sahoo opened his editorial by calling [www.stampsofindia.com](http://www.stampsofindia.com) a hate site and compared it to hate sites in Pakistan and elsewhere operated by Muslim fundamentalists and closed with a quote from the bible 'O Lord, forgive him for he knows not what he is doing'. For good measure he in between inappropriately mentions the 'Shreemad Bhagwat", one of the sacred scriptures for Hindus, in the true spirit of secularism, shall we say.

Sahoo begins his editorial in the current combined issue by singing the success of the so-called national that he had recently organized. As always he has his facts wrong. He mentions that a national exhibition is held in private sector for the first time. We would like to inform him that many exhibitions including several nationals since 1894 till 1970 were held in private sector. The last national organized by the private sector was held in 1972 under the chairmanship of S P Luiz who has a yet unsurpassed record for an Indian philatelist - 17 medals in one year.

Sahoo then goes on to say that the exhibition was organized without a single paisa contribution in money or manpower of the Department of Post or the nation. However the advertisements by the Orissa state government owned corporations in the exhibition souvenir belie his claim.

Thereafter Sahoo poses a question, 'Can DOP (read India Post) think of its profit without philately?' We would like Sahoo to disclose how through philately Sahoo can, not only cover the annual loss of over Rs.14 billion for the year ending March 31, 2002 but turn a profit for India Post.

He goes on to falsely accuse India Post for not wanting to hold exhibitions whereas India Post has held hundreds of exhibitions every year. Sahoo personally had benefited from some of these being a jury at two such exhibitions in last one year alone that were fully organized and funded by India Post.

He refers to India Post's web site publishing clarification of their stand vis-à-vis the so-called national but has no guts to mention that the exhibition's web site had contents that in India Post's opinion were causing 'criminal offense'. Sahoo abused the trust reposed in him by India Post by falsely claiming for nearly the entire year of 2002 that the exhibition is patronized by India Post, names of several high ranking officers of India Post were shown as members of the organizing committee without their consent, and that India Post will issue a set of 4 stamps and a miniature sheet on the occasion.

We are amazed with the amount of India Post bashing Sahoo indulges in. The reason Jatia hoisted Sahoo as President of PCI was because he was told that Sahoo being a government servant knows the working of the government and shall be able to foster closer ties with India Post.

Further on lacking the courage to name the persons, he obliquely refers to two members of PCI who have a private axe to grind and want to have control over PCI without following democratic procedure. The identity of the two PCI members created maximum commotion and raised most laughs as every one came out with his own selection of two favorite names. The use of the 'control' befittingly describes the mentality of those who have been having control of PCI since inception and on whose behest Sahoo has to write this garbage. The organization which had the history of completing the election process in less than 30 seconds is now talking about democratic procedure. It is a change for better if they mean what they say.

Sahoo then gets into a whining mode and says that India Post wanted to be a part of the last recognized national in 2001, INPEX EMPIREPEX, and monopolized the key positions 'though it was not wholly government sponsored exhibition'. We fail to understand the point Sahoo is harping on. In the last national even the name of the exhibition was changed by India Post who spent nearly Rs.1 million on it. In case Sahoo had a problem with India Post nominees as key persons in the exhibition then what he, as PCI president, was doing when this was done? These nominations still did not stop the mischief in the jury room by those who treat Indian philately as their personal property. The awards of the

2001 national exhibition are marred in controversy and one of the exhibitors has filed a suit in the courts. We would like to hear from V S Dastur who was the coordinator of that show besides being chairman of the organizing committee and co-chairman of the jury as Sahoo is not telling the truth.

He questions India Post's demanding an explanation on their name being associated with his so-called national. Yet he characteristically conceals the fact that since early February 2002 he has been fraudulently publicizing India Post's names in all publicity. He did not desist even when he was explicitly told to do so by India Post in May 2002 and continued till December 2002 to use their name. He was forced to acknowledge that India Post is not associated with the exhibition after the action initiated by India Post.

He then throws up a blatant lie that India Post was asking for payment for supply of frames. We ask Sahoo to make public the communication from India Post in support of his accusation. In fact Sahoo held on to the frames that were sent to Bhubaneswar for a zonal exhibition in April 2002 for over 8 months and upset the plans of several other exhibitions in other parts of India.

Sahoo springs another deceitful question 'Have you heard of people in another state going to courts against an exhibition organized by a state level society?' He yet again does not provide any details for his vague accusations. And here we thought Sahoo was all along claiming his show as national.

Rajesh Varma, a life member of PCI and an exhibitor in three nationals in 1997, 2000, and 2001 filed a suit against PCI and others citing violations of rules at whims and fancies of those who control PCI and prayed that Sahoo, Dilip Shah, Dastur, M G Pitte, and A R Singhee are not the proper persons to hold the exhibitions of Philately in India and a decree for perpetual injunction be passed restraining them from holding the exhibitions mischievously or from using any national fund directly or indirectly permanently.

He once again falsely claims that this suit delayed the exhibition by two months. He took the decision to postpone the exhibition on December 13, 2003 when he received over fax the communication from India Post which was also put up on India Post's web site later. We doubt that he had the papers related to the court case filed at New Delhi on December 11, 2002. He also fails to mention the fact that twice a caveat was filed by the organizers of this so-called national in the Bhubaneswar courts against, believe it or not, all members of PCI.

He then explains that the so-called national controversially named "INPEX 02" was held in 2003 like some stamps printed in a particular year are issued next year. Till a little while ago Sahoo was against whatever India Post did but here he has candidly not only admired and adopted a practice that is not very popular with philatelists. Being ever the opportunist he selectively uses whatever is advantageous to him when it is advantageous to him.



Sahoo, who does not have access to any database on philatelic statistics on India what to say of the world, grandiosely proclaims that there are no examples in this world where exhibitions held with private initiative are denied support by a department whose job is to promote philately. We simply refuse to comment on such generalizations that are not supported by facts.

He exhorts to 'calculate the amount of revenue the DOP (read India Post) lost as it did not avail the opportunity to market their stamps and other products.' We like facts and figures and hereby ask him to let us have the amount of revenue earned in last national that he had organized in 2000, and the national in 2001 and then we will be able to compare the figures with the amount of revenue being brought in by some of the district level exhibitions. The results will speak for themselves.

He rues the fact that there were no 'Special covers, no special stamp' but stops short of disclosing that he has only himself to be blamed for it.

We wholeheartedly agree with him, for once, when he asks India Post to listen to saner voices and unwind their mind. We do feel that India Post has apparently already started doing this after nearly 25 years of listening to voices of PCI.

He then once again calls the exhibition the first national fully organized in private sector. Calling this exhibition as the 10<sup>th</sup> national is not objected to by the older societies that have organized such exhibitions in the past, just shows how for petty personal gains the representatives of such societies dare not open their mouth against incorrect presentation of history by those who control PCI and dole out philatelic favors.

Even with this diatribe Sahoo does not rest and in his trademark vagueness closes with 'We request the Department of Posts to find out how some fellows have denuded their archives of valuable philatelic treasures and at what cost.' Sahoo is an authority on denuding the archives as well as determining the cost of such treasures (usually exorbitant). His last line however seems out of place in a piece about so-called national that no one else claims as success except less than 100 persons in a country of over a billion people.

This also seems a change of policy for PCI that till now had thwarted all attempts by India Post in implementing the ban on the display of proofs, color trials, progressives, and other such restricted material as such items are usually stolen from the government custody and it affected the interests of a majority of those who control PCI. We have devoted Part 29 of this column in Issue # 88 of October 24, 2002 entirely on this subject.

However we never argue with a good decision and recommend India Post to initiate suitable action on Sahoo's request. To start with India Post may recover from former PCI President, P Gupta, the official correspondence between Master of India Security Press and Director General of Posts that 'Postal Stationery of India', a publication of

India Study Circle for Philately in UK by Derek Lang mentions he has. It will also be worthwhile to find out how these papers and relevant treasures landed with Gupta.

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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>

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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

\$20,000 STAMP FOR SPACE MAIL

For as little as \$20,000, you could soon have a letter sent to a new "post office" aboard the International Space Station (ISS) and back care of the Russian space agency.

Having suspended its lucrative space tourism service after the Columbia disaster, the cash-strapped agency has now turned to selling postage stamps, the Interfax news agency reports. The price of a space mail stamp - between \$20,000 and \$30,000 - may sound rather steep but space work is a costly business, its press secretary said. All proceeds from the stamp sales will be ploughed back into space work, Sergey Gorbunov told Interfax.

Space tourists such as Californian financier Dennis Tito paid Rosaviakosmos \$20m for their ventures into space but that service was halted in February when the suspension of NASA's shuttle flights left Russia the only ISS partner capable of still sending spacecraft to the station.

Now a special firm is being set up to sell the new stamps. Anyone wishing to have a letter franked on the space station for rather more than the cost of a first-class stamp might bear in mind some overheads cited by the Russians:

Delivery of one kilo of cargo to the ISS: \$10-20,000

Return of one kilo from the ISS to Earth: \$60,000

Cost of one hour's work by the team aboard the ISS: \$18-19,000

Rosaviakosmos has not revealed whether it will be delivering on Saturday, when the next crewed Russian rocket is due to take off for the ISS from Baikonur Kazakhstan.

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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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About STAMPS OF INDIA COLLECTORS COMPANION -- ADMINISTRIVIA

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