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

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History of Postal Communications in India, Part 2

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JHINGANS JOTTINGS

Hi

Many thanks to all those who voted for Taj as one of the 7 wonders of the world and contributed towards making it also the wonder with highest number of votes polled.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the History of Postal Communications in India' by Sangeeta Deogawanka is here and you can now communicate your comments directly with the author at [s\\_deogawanka@yahoo.com](mailto:s_deogawanka@yahoo.com).

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

- M&SJ

Our thanks to the Contributors and Sources to this issue: Madhukar Deogawanka, and Ajit Dash,

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

FORTHCOMING STAMP ISSUES

The Government of India has declared weeklong State mourning due to death of former Prime Minister of India, Chandra Shekhar on July 8, 2007. India Post has decided not to release the 3 commemorative stamps on July 13, 2007 as scheduled earlier.

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

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

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NEW POSTAL STATIONERY

Following Meghdoot post cards with advertisement were recently released:

Consumer Rights 4, Hindi
Sex Determination during Pregnancy is a Crime, Hindi & English
Save Girl Child, Hindi & English
Girl Child or boy Child Love & Care Them Alike, Hindi & English

The grand total till date is now 421, with 145 added in 2007 alone.

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

Following post card with advertisement was recently released:

Apr 27, Adult Education, Gujarati

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

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

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

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RECENT SPECIAL POSTMARKS & COVERS

Jun 26: Kolkata, Inauguration of permanent pictorial postmark at Kolkata General Post Office

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

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

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AUCTION ACTION

The Philatelic Trade & Publications Private Limited of Bangalore ptppl@vsnl.net is holding Postal-cum-Spot Auction # 28 on July 29, 2007.

There are many interesting items of India & Rest of the World. Some of the highlights of the auction are:

Australia - Booklet panes of Geo VI, Germany - Proofs/Facsimile of Hitler, German Postcards (Hitler Era also), GB FDCs, Wide Range of Airmail / Aero philately / Balloon Mails / Rocket Mails - Stamps / Flight Covers Pre-stamps cover of European Countries & India from 1791 onwards, Silk Covers from Nepal, Pre Independence India from 1854 Lithographs up to King Geo VI (including 4 As - 1st Printing), Railway Cancellation - Very Scarce Mail Guard cancellation, on cover, Azad Hind in blocks, Fiscals - Stamp Papers, Post Independence up to 2006 includes Stamps/ Year Sets/ FDCs / Stationery/ Freaks & Errors.

Most of the Items will be uploaded on www.photos.yahoo.com/ptppl which can be viewed. Items which are not uploaded could also be put on request.

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NEW CHIEF OF PHILATELY DIVISION

R R P Singh has taken over the charge of the Philately Division of India Post's Headquarters on July 11, 2007 in place of Kavery Banerjee.

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INDIA ENGLAND CRICKET RELATIONS

Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), the home of the cricket in United Kingdom, is issuing two limited edition special covers on July 19, 2007 the first day of the first India England test match at Lord's cricket grounds. Special pictorial postmark will depict newly commissioned Pataudi Trophy named after the senior Nawab of Pataudi.

An exhibition will also open at the Lord's showcasing India England cricket relations. The three month long exhibition will feature cricket historian Boria Majumdar's collection of memorabilia along with the collection of the MCC.

The covers shall be available in India at Rs 1500 each cover from Kalyan Negal knegal@gmail.com. The official issue price is GBP 10.

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STAMP QUIZZES - A HANDBOOK OF PHILATELIC TRIVIA & QUIZZES

Author: Anil Dhir

Publisher: Amadeus Press, [amadeusbooks@yahoo.co.in](mailto:amadeusbooks@yahoo.co.in)

Address: 112 Vaishno Villa, Satya Nagar, Bhubaneswar 751007

Price: Rs 300 or \$ 20, Pages 244  
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RECENT PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS

Stamp Today, Whole # 7, May Jun 2006

Editor: Vijay H Seth

Publisher: Vijay H Seth

Annual Subscription: Rs 180
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RECENT & FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Radhika Doraisamy, Principal Chief Postmaster General of Tamil Nadu Circle of India Post inaugurated a two day philatelic and numismatic exhibition on July 6, 2007 at Chennai. The exhibition held at Russian

Centre of Sciences and Culture was organized by the Probus Club of Chennai, the Russian Centre of Sciences and Culture and India Post.

Dakshina Kannada Philatelic and Numismatic Association organized a numismatic exhibition of the collection of M R Pavanje at Pandeshwar head post office on July 8, 2007.

May 15-Jul 31: New Delhi, Exhibition of Stamps on Nature

Aug 10-12: Bangalore, Karnataka State Philatelic Exhibition

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

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

#### MEETINGS

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

#### ADVERTISEMENTS

Rs 250 per insertion, Discounts available for 5 or more insertions  
All advertising must be prepaid. Send your ad to [ad@stampsofindia.net](mailto:ad@stampsofindia.net)

Terms: 1. This facility to advertise the wants and for sale philatelic items is a privilege available only to the subscribers of the Stamps of India Collectors Companion.

2. A Subscriber can insert only one ad per issue.

3. The maximum size acceptable is 5 Lines of 64 characters per line.

4. All ads shall be published at the sole discretion of the editors who reserve the right to refuse any advertisement.

5. Stamps of India does not endorse any advertiser and can not be held liable for transactions of any advertiser.

WANTED in white-gum/pristine Mint Never Hinged Condition at Even Better Prices Now: Jai Hind 1947 Complete Set of 3 for Rs 210, UPU 1949 Complete Set of 4 for Rs 600, Small and Large Quantities welcome, Can also buy the above in Indian or tropicalised gum condition at condition wise appropriate prices: ASHISH TALWAR [talwar2002@hotmail.com](mailto:talwar2002@hotmail.com)

BUYING Rajkumar Shukla - Sheet for Rs 20,000, Single for Rs 400

WANTED Gandhi 1948 mint 4 value, 3 value, in sheets, singles, blocks, mounted or unmounted and on covers, Also Gandhi Service stamps on covers Please send your offers to RAMAWTAR B JAIN, Mobile: 093777 66365

Visit [www.delcampe.net/stores/rajus2001](http://www.delcampe.net/stores/rajus2001) for Lions Club, Masonic Lodge / Freemasonry, Mushroom, Reptiles, Birds, Animals and many more themes from hundreds of countries with images at very reasonable prices.

ABDUL AZIZ, E-mail: [rajus2001@gmail.com](mailto:rajus2001@gmail.com) A - 32/146 Chittanpura, Varanasi-221001, India. Mobile: 0 98389 70190

#### READERS FORUM

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

PREMNATH KUDVA

In your #64 issue of Stamps of India newsletter you had published Abhai

Mishra's letter "ABHAI MISHRA ON ANTARCTIC PHILATELY IN INDIA". Prior to this I had tried several Google searches to get more information on this aspect of philately. I got in touch with Abhai and found out how I could get my covers cancelled in Antarctica.

I prepared and sent my covers in November 2002 and I received my covers April 2006. The images of these covers are located at Covers from Antarctica 2002 [http://community.livejournal.com/psk\\_stamps/38548.html](http://community.livejournal.com/psk_stamps/38548.html)

Soon after receiving this set of covers I prepared and sent another of set of covers in September 2006, these (unlike the first lot which came very late) I received back in April 2006. The images of these covers are located at Covers from Antarctica 2006 [http://community.livejournal.com/psk\\_stamps/55010.html](http://community.livejournal.com/psk_stamps/55010.html) Thanks to you and Abhai for this to have happened.

P R KRISHNAN

India Post has increased the printing quantities of miniature sheets from the normal level of .1 million to .4 million for the last few issues. We have seen in the past any quantity which is above .1 million is still lying stock without monetary contribution to the department. For example the issues of Agra Fort and Letter Box (issue quantity .2 million) is still available in the philatelic bureaus in spite of these issued more than 2 years back. Why department is just printing this huge quantities - is it to avoid speculation or they think there is a demand for the miniature sheets? And why they keep the stock and kill philately. In my opinion the speculative nature among philatelic investors does not lie with quantity alone but also the denomination. When the department issues a Rs 5 miniature sheet they have to be careful with quantities but when the miniature sheet issued in the denomination of Rs 20, Rs 30 and Rs 40 this may not attract the investors because of the huge money involved in buying the same from the post office or from the market. My earnest request to the department is to keep the miniature sheet issue quantities around 100000 pcs otherwise after 5 years billions of rupees worth of miniature sheets will be rotting in the treasury of every post office.

Also my second appeal is keep the size of the miniature sheets in a useable size - the recent issue of Buddha miniature sheet is a wonderful example - once you affix the miniature sheet on the FDC you will not find any space for cancellation - normally the special cancellation on the FDC - the cancellation is ties both the stamp and the cover. Will Department of Post take a note of this genuine request?

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FEATURES & RESOURCES

HISTORY OF POSTAL COMMUNICATIONS IN INDIA

Part 2 - ANCIENT INDIA

A historical perspective

(with emphasis on Overland Routes)

By Sangeeta Deogawanka

The East has always held an aura of mystery to the Western and Middle Eastern civilizations. India in particular has always lured explorers, traders and pilgrims over the centuries. Thus overland routes and merchant links were established at very early stages, much before the

Portuguese gained route by sea in the 15th-16th centuries. These overland routes took a general South-Easterly sweep from Turkey through Middle-East to India.

A historical review of the early postal systems in India reveals an element of anachronism. Well-laid out routes and messenger systems emerged from the trade movements and the dissemination of Buddhism, in the Northern and North-Western frontiers. An efficient communication system with the principal country was spurred by the subsequent foreign invasions from the West. Thus in retrograde, we find the early and subsequent development of mail systems in India were influenced by the Persians, Greeks, Arabs and later, the Mongols.

The Arab and Persian chronicles record the movement of nomadic tribes, explorers and invaders who laid the principal routes with Central Asia and the Far East (present China & South-East Asia). Before the Arab conquests, the Persians were the intermediaries with complete monopoly over the silk trade. The centre of trade activity as early as in 4th century AD was Asia, chiefly controlled by the silk traffic. Many of the important land routes connecting the Silk Route necessarily linked India, in particular the Southern (Silk) Route and the Ancient Tea Route. Postal history of a region is inexorably linked with the study of routes. However, the overland link quickly lost its importance as trade across the seas developed.

A royal highway connected Taxila with Pataliputra and terminated at Tamralipti, the main port in the Ganges delta. On the western coast the major port of Bhargukaccha / Barygaza (modern Bharuch) was connected with the Ganges Valley via Ozene (Ujjain). From the Narmada valley, the routes went into northwestern Deccan and continued along rivers flowing eastward to various parts of the peninsula.

Persian influence

Trends in the early periods suggest a predilection for overland routes, chiefly because of the hazards of sea travel and uncharted sea routes. The Persian Royal Road forged with many routes leading to India which were also protected by the Achaemenids. Topography determined the course of travel and routes. In the North-West, the presence of rivers and the numerous Wadis (riverbeds) served as natural roads. Not only did these Wadis aid navigation, but the presence of subsoil moisture and resultant availability of water also made travel easy. The mountain streams were also easy to cross or ford. So land routes followed direction of the Wadis. To the West of Sind, the topography was more conducive to land traffic. Albeit, the many rivers that united before flowing into the sea, meant that river traffic was also high using boat-bridges (made of timber and rafts) and rafts. However travel by water was slow, and was mostly preferred for carriage of heavy goods, routes being confined to the Cis-Indus region.

The ancient overland routes stretching from Persia to India were mere foot-tracks (which later developed into highways). They were primarily nature-made paths and ruts created by hoofs of animals, and most likely centuries of human traverse. Along these tracks were shacks that served as rest places for the travellers (military personnel, traders and pilgrims). For safety and practical purposes, they travelled in caravans of pack - oxen and doubtless carried letters and messages for fellow tradesmen and private individuals. At the same time the military

envoys and Generals conveyed important letters and firmans. Thus two parallel lines of communication prevailed, though the imperial system was more organized and speedy.

From early accounts we know that travel over long distances was either by foot or horse-back, the envoys using horses to carry urgent missives and other messengers conveying letters on foot. However, organised postal stations and relays existed at regular intervals along the Royal Road for use by royal messengers. It was only with the advent of the Arabs that a stable form of communication was adopted with the Indian territory and the tracks developed into highways.

Arab influence of the Caliphate (7th - 11th century A.D.)
Quest of political power and wealth by the Arabs, led to their increasing presence in the Indian sub-continent. Initially by the peaceful means of commerce and later with conquests, extensive routes were laid over both land and sea.

The origin of the postal system during the Muslim rule can be traced to the conquest of Sind by the Arab ruler of Iraq, Mohammad bin Qasim, in 712 A.D. The Arab chiefs established many territories which necessitated maintenance of a regular line of communication with the Caliph of Bagdad, for military intelligence and administrative instructions. The special horse couriers carried letters from Caliph to Qasim on every third day and from Iraq to Sind in seven days.

The Caliph Mu'awiyah (602-680) is considered the first ruler to have established the Department of Posts or Diwan-i-Barid for official communication throughout his far-flung Caliphate. Although the Barid was used primarily for imperial communication, it later became less exclusive and included personal and business letters. (The word Barid means a "post-animal", "post-horse", "courier" or institution of "post" according to 'Encyclopedia of Islam')

Barid messengers also became the bearers of information like the price of goods traded, but unlike their doot counterparts in ancient kingdoms of India, barids were publicly appointed officers. In this way, the Barid service played a role similar to modern postal system and is indeed used even in the modern times in various Arab countries as the original term for the Post.

The Caliph kept an elaborate system of posts at intervals of a few miles, where the official messenger could avail of a fresh relay of horses or pass his despatch to another member. These postal services extended across the Hindukush in the north as far as Kabul and Delhi in the South, with 930 post stations along six routes from Bagdad to India. The postal system under the Caliphate was independent of the political administration. It was solely used for conveyance of letters with two categories of officials, the nowaqqium and the farwaneqqyun. The former played the role of the modern postmaster, in charge of receipt, despatches and supervision of the conveyance of official letters, while the latter was in the garb of the modern Post Master General controlling operations at every province and reporting to the Caliphate at Bagdad. Thus, it is evident that the State postal systems in the Princely States of India were influenced by the systems pioneered by the Caliphate.

Relays of horses were used for long distance postal services, to keep the Caliphate and the Muslim invaders posted about the happenings throughout their vast territory. There is mention of frequent use of the horse-collar, the breast strap, the cross-bow, the stirrup, and even the wheelbarrow for rendering the horse service swift.

Though there is record of wheeled carriages, oxen drawn chariots, bullock carts, ekkas and tongas being used for trade and travel purposes, no mention has been found by this author of any of these being used for carrying mail during this period.

During this time, the Empires of the Han Chinese, Romans, Kushans, Mauryans and Greeks, provided a safe route for traders to travel. They encouraged long distance trade and speedy communication.

To increase speed of communication the speed of the messenger had to be enhanced. Thus spawned good roads and well provisioned staging posts at which fresh men and horses were always kept ready. Much has been written about these swift horse couriers who galloped with fine abandon, braving the mountainous terrain, crossing swift-flowing rivers and ice-covered slopes in the most extreme of weather conditions.

In the ancient period, when external influences were primarily through overland trade and incursions, the swiftness of the horse messengers played a key role in communications, and to an extent, probably shaped the subsequent historical events in India.

The 'History of Postal Communications in India' series of articles are available online at <http://www.stampsofindia.com/readroom/SDHPC.htm>

Indian Laws Relevant to Philately

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

Report Cyber Crime & Internet Fraud related to Indian Philately

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

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NEWSSCAN

<We invite you to contribute clippings on philatelic and postal matters, from other print and electronic publications, for inclusion here>

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ADMINISTRIVIA

'Stamps of India Collectors Companion' is published by Madhukar Jhingan [mjhingan@yahoo.com](mailto:mjhingan@yahoo.com) for 'Stamps of India', 49-D, BG-5, Paschim Vihar, New Delhi 110063. Phone: +91-11-25281578, Mobile: +91-9350537037  
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STAMPS OF INDIA <http://www.stampsofindia.com>

The Hub Site of Indian Philately

PRINCELY STATES REPORT <http://www.princelystates.com>

Journal of Indian States History, Philately & Numismatics

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

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

INDIAN POSTAL GUIDE 1869

The first issue of the official postal guide, reprinted by Stamps of India 2004, 236 pages, hardbound, enlarged from original octavo to A4 size, limited edition, Special price - Rs 2750 post paid worldwide.

Credit cards accepted <http://www.stampsofindia.com/99999.htm>

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