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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 Jhingan

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History of Postal Communications in India, Part 4

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JHINGANS JOTTINGS

Hi

The centenary of India's First War of Independence was celebrated in 1957 with a set of 2 stamps issued on August 15, 1957. This is the only occasion when the First Day postmark was provided with two dates on the two days August 15 and 16! Why?

In case you know the answer please write to us now. We will carry the correct answer in the next issue.

This is no contest and there are no prizes to be won. However it is an idea to focus attention on little known interesting factoids of Indian philately.

You are also invited to contribute similar stories to share with our readers.

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

- M&SJ

Our thanks to the Contributors and Sources to this issue: Ashok Kumar Tiwary,

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

Sep 23: 53rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Plenary Conference, New Delhi,

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

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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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

Indian Thematic Society indianthematicsociety@gmail.com is holding postal auction # 38. The 121 lots auction closes on October 20, 2007.

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

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SATISH MISRA

The well known auctioneer, Satish Mishra of Bareilly informs that his new phone mobile number is 0 99171 66551.

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RECENT & FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Sep 29-Oct 3: Surat, Mahatma Gandhi Stamps and Memorabilia Exhibition
Venue: Pandit Dindayal Upadhyay Indoor Stadium, Surat
Sales Stalls: Rs 11,000 with accommodation and meals for two on twin sharing basis
Contact: Ramavtar Jain 0 93777 66365

Oct 6-8: Ahmedabad, Gujarat State Philatelic Exhibition

Oct 13-15: Gwalior, Coins & Stamps Exhibition
Issues: 2 special covers,
Sales Stalls: Rs 2000/ Rs 2500
Contact: Neel Kamal Maheshwari, 0 94257 45455, 0 94444 50420

Oct 26-29: Jaipur, 12th Inter School Philatelic Exhibition Schoolpex
Venue: St Xavier's School
Issues: 2 special covers including 1 scented cover,
Sales Stalls: Rs 600, Also accommodation assistance
Contact: Rajesh Paharia, Mobile 9351716969

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

Nov 30-Dec 2: New Delhi, Coins & Banknotes

Dec 5-8: Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala State Philatelic Exhibition
Venue: Kanakakunnu Palace

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>

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VIEWS & OPINIONS

READERS FORUM

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

HEMANT V KULKARNI, USA

It is very interesting to find newly issued commemoratives mint stamps from India skyrocketing in price in the same year of issue (Philsensex index) which is unheard of anywhere in the world. This is possible only because of the low number of 'sheet-prints' in comparison to the population number of Indian hobbyists and thus carries absolutely no value in rest of the world outside of India. Besides, these stamps have been poorly crafted in design, art and print colors. A genuine collector looks for rarity not through such artificial means used in benefit of the sellers who have access only to the Indian Philatelic bureaus -it seems.

FEATURES & RESOURCES

HISTORY OF POSTAL COMMUNICATIONS IN INDIA, PART 4
By Sangeeta Deogawanka

Part 4 - MEDIEVAL INDIA (1030 - 1757 AD)

Structure of the land postal systems in Pre-Mughal period

India has always evoked a sense of wonder and curiosity since time immemorial. Its rich culture, spices and trade supremacy in the realm of ancient maritime activity, enthused many an invader over the centuries. Each of them left his mark on the administrative and communication machinery. As India has undergone a long period of variable sovereignties, communication systems have not endured. Even the well-structured postal communication of the Mauryas and Guptas of ancient India became redundant.

Thus the overland trading activities along the northern precincts and sea borne trading hegemony with Europe, Africa and Asia become significant to studies of postal history. For they laid the foundations of a rudimentary postal system in medieval India, that was to remain for centuries to come.

Postal systems are cardinal to an empire's administration. Yet, this has regrettably been unacknowledged by the conventional historian even though reams have been written about lifestyle and art! Though there is mention in the ancient Hindu texts, detailed records are either lost in obscurity or buried in libraries and regional untapped scriptures. Therefore one may treat the chronicles of early travellers as annals of the earlier epoch, until better resources and records come to light.

Herein, the records of travelling historians Marco Polo, Ibn Batuta, Ferishta and Ziauddin Barani have assumed significance as vital reference links for studies on medieval India. Albeit, there is the occasional lack of information on postal systems in Southern extremities of India, that remained outside the ambit of most foreign invasions.

The nomenclature adopted for the postal systems of medieval India adheres to the treatise that each ruler established his own postal system, tailored to meet the needs of the sovereign. This was essentially a royal or State postal system used for effective rule. Thus, the period under review vis-à-vis the postal system, has been divided according to the period of regime or from invasion onwards).

Under Mahmud of Ghazni (1001 -1025)

With dominion over North-Western and Central India, Ghazni established an elaborate network of foot messengers. Those for intelligence gathering were called 'Sarran' and horse couriers for urgent missives were called 'Khail Sarran', paid bonuses for their special service. A mounted courier service called 'Askudars' conveyed private correspondence of important chieftains and also the official correspondence. Each province had a Postal headquarter, overseen by a Post Master called 'Sahib-i-Barid'. His importance in the administrative hierarchy is evident from the responsibilities bestowed upon him ~ administrative report of the province, and conduct of the military officers. The 'Sahib-I-Risalat' who was the head of the correspondence department, functioned as the emissary of the conqueror, receiving information through postal agencies and acting upon them.

Under Mohammad of Ghor (1186 - 1206)

With the stretch of empire from Delhi to Bengal, the Arabic model of postal system was adopted. So the 'Dhawa' (runner), 'Qasid' (messenger) and 'Ulagh'/'Ulaq' (horse courier) took precedence, even over the 'Khola' or secret service agent employed by the Pala administration in Bengal. These were more in the nature of news-couriers, the 'dhawa' doubling up as errand boys, and the messengers acting as conduits for forward transmission of messages. The camel riding horse couriers were called 'Jamaza'.

Under Qutub ud-din Aibak (1206 - 1210)

He consolidated the system established by his predecessor Mohammad of Ghor. A messenger post system was introduced by Qutub ud-din Aibak that was later expanded into the Dak Chowkis by his successor.

Under the Mongol invasion of Genghis Khan (1221 - 1226)

The Mongols under the dominance of Genghis Khan in particular, achieved a speed of communication similar to that of the ancient Persians. Their chief contribution was the development of roads and posts in the areas under their control, which in India merely covered the northern fringes. Genghis Khan established the 'Horse Post House' or yamb messenger system, found at a distance of every 25 miles. In between, were intermediary posts, which also served as sleeping quarters of the imperial foot runners, furnished with bells on their girdle. The runners were each assigned a 3-mile stretch, operating on a relay system, thus covering a ten day's journey in one. Though the period of Mongol influence was confined to a small time frame and terrain in India, the foundations of the first international postal system was being laid, so two innovations maybe noted. The practice of clerks at every Post House with clearly assigned duties, and the system of express delivery of letters. These riders deployed for urgent delivery, also wore jingling bells at waist like the foot-runners. The express relay system covered 250 miles in day and equally a night.

To be continued in Issue # 310.

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

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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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