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Guest Editorial

TIME TO THINK

Those at the helm are highly upset that there is a very poor demand for Indian stamps in the foreign countries with the result they are unable to earn that scarce commodity-the Foreign Exchange. The answer is not far to seek for such a miserable performance. First of all we have no set programme, the stamps never come out on the day of issue for various reasons. Secondly our publicity, we mean advance publicity, is extremely poor. At times local people even do not know the exact date of issue. If at all they come to know, they get the information through the daily newspapers three to four days in advance. If this be the fate of people in India, how can the information reach stamp collectors in foreign countries? Thirdly we give undue importance to 'personality stamps' which do not find favour with foreign stamp collectors. Too much of string pulling from various State leaders to issue a stamp on a person of that particular State or province has tarnished our image in the philatelic world. Well, if they are not prepared to change their policy on the 'personality stamps' then they need not grumble for not having earned the elusive foreign exchange.

Fourthly, over fifty years have passed with in which period the India Post have hardly issued a-dozen attractive series of stamps which can leave behind a sense of appreciation and an impact on the world philatelic market. Fifthly, we would not like to run down our designers and printers because we know that they have the right type of talent but they are not given proper opportunity and the required time. Designing of stamps requires good imagination and enough time at the disposal of the designer whereas printing is also not so easy as Nasik Press is not equipped with up-to-date modern machinery. Lack of proper equipment and poor quality of printing ink is not likely to give the desired result.

The sixth reason is lack of proper distribution of the new commemorative stamps issued from time to time. The India Post boast of having in this country more than one lakh fifty thousand post offices. Out of this huge number hardly a thousand post offices must be getting all our commemorative stamps to sell. We have come across a number of persons who at times say that they have never seen some of the stamps. Shall we call them ignorant? No, they are not ignorant for the simple reason that they never saw such stamps sold at the post office counter. Take for example a premier city like Bombay and try to find out as to how many post offices are getting at their

counters the, commemorative stamps on the day of issue? To our disappointment we have found that even some of the busy post offices are left out. We naturally do not expect great miracles from our postal administrators, but we only hope and pray that our commemorative stamps at least reach one fourth of the existing post offices in India.

If one wants to survive and stand against the competition of other stamp issuing countries, one has to find ways and means to push his products to the customers. The term 'scarcity' in philately plays an important part and the India Post must see that each and every commemorative it brings out must be exhausted at the post offices' counters within a fortnight or so. A memo should be given to all the postmasters at various post offices that the commemorative stamps sent at the post office must be sold first and this order must be strictly followed.

The Government lay great stress on tourism but have they ever applied their minds as to what important part the stamps can play in boosting tourism. How many sets of stamps have they issued so far so as to attract tourists to this country on art, culture and scenic beauty? Try to show our tourists resorts, art, culture, costumes, dances, folk tales, our industrial and scientific progress, flora and fauna etc., on our stamps and see that they reach the foreigners so as to attract them to this country. In a report from Tanzania, a very small country compared to India, we gather that it has made the best use of its postage stamps in attracting a number of tourists to Tanzania. In September 1977 Tanzania has issued one set of stamps to boost tourism. The stamps depict Game and Tourist Lodges. Tanzania has earned a fairly big amount by way of foreign exchange.

As the editor of this journal we regularly receive publicity folders from almost all the countries of the world two to three months in advance giving full details of a new issue to come even though they are thousands of miles away from us. Some countries have already sent us their stamp issuing programmes for the next year. This type of advance planning and preparation have always paid rich dividends to the countries concerned. Though many years have passed, from Independence - year of 1947, we are still standing with our arms akimbo as we were, whereas a number of small countries like Bhutan, Nepal, Nigeria, Tanzania and many others have taken a distinct march over us on the philatelic front.

If India Post wants to push its product in the world market, it must try to create a climate of confidence.

- Late. P.M. MEDHORA

STAMP NEWS

DURGA DAS

2.05.2003

500

0.4 Million



Durga Das (1900-1974) was a legendary journalist of India who did signal service to the national cause through his vocation.

Hailing from the Jalandhar District of Punjab, he started taking interest in journalism from a relatively young age. His interest in news and news reporting also drew him towards the national movement.

His career, spread over fifty-five years, fell into four distinct phases. He was with the Associated Press of India, now known as the Press Trust of India, from 1919 to 1937 and was its Chief Parliamentary Correspondent, ace reporter and editor. Thereafter, he worked as a Special Representative (and in other capacities also) of The Statesman of Kolkata and Delhi from 1937 to 1943. He became Joint Editor and political columnist of the Hindustan Times in April 1944 and Chief Editor of the paper in 1957. He founded The India News and Feature Alliance, a feature agency devoted to the regional press, on 14 November, 1959 and was its Managing Director, Editor-in-Chief and political columnist.

As a journalist Durga Das was fair and objective in reporting, informative and analytical in writing, constructive in editorial comment, and a supporter of the voice of dissent as a political columnist. For him, journalism was an opportunity to serve the motherland. Professional honours came to him in various forms. These included positions like the Chairman of the Press Gallery Committee of the Indian Parliament, President of All India Newspaper Editors' Conference, founder-President of the Press Club of India and member of the Press Council. Durga Das authored two important books, namely India and the World (1958), and India from Curzon to Nehru & After (1969).

His love for the profession found culmination when he founded the Durga Das Ratan Devi Trust in 1969 to give five annual Durga Ratan Awards for excellence in journalism.

Theme : Journalism, Personalities.

GOLDEN VOICES OF YESTERYEARS

15.05.2003

500,500,500,500

0.8 Million

Film music is omnipresent in India. Songs in different languages, sung by talented singers and set to catchy tunes fill the urban and rural landscapes of the country, emanating from radio sets, public address systems and cassette players.

Songs are a crucial ingredient of Indian films. The technique of playback i.e. using a voice 'double' to sing for the actors has been in use since the 1930s. The popularity of the songs ensured that some of the singers went on to become cult figures and cultural icons.

Kishore Kumar (1929-1987), singer, actor, composer and director, was one of the most versatile and loved personalities of the Indian film industry. His first Hindi song ap



peared in the film Ziddi (1948). Though he focussed on an acting career for a few years, the immensely popular songs of the film Aaradhana (1969) marked his return as a play back singer much in demand. The yodeling style of Kishore Kumar had the entire nation cheering for him. He was honoured with several awards, including eight Filmfare awards.



Mukesh (1923-1976), with his mellifluous voice, captured the imagination of not just the Indian audience, but music lovers in many other parts of the world also with songs like Awara hoon.... and Mera joota hai japani... He made his debut as a singing hero in the film Nirdosh (1941). The song Dil jalta hai to jalne de... for the film Pahli Nazar (1945) established him as a prominent name in Indian Cinema. He also sang Ghazals, Bhajans and the Shri Ram Charit Manas in his unique style. Mukesh went on to win five Filmfare awards. He received the National award in 1974 for the best play back singer for his song Kai baar yun bhi dekha hai....

Mohammed Rafi (1924-1980) rose to prominence with Baiju Bawara's Tu Ganga ki mauj, mai Jamuna kidhara.... in the early fifties and became the favourite of many millions of music lovers throughout the country. His style was smooth and easy and he could hold the melody unchanged even at a high pitch. His range could cover emotions from Bhajans to Ghazals to 'Yohoo'. Rafi was adjudged the best play back singer by the National Film Awards Jury for the song Kya hua tera vaada....

Hemant Kumar (1920-1989) was one of the most prolific singers of the 1950s & 60s. He was also an accomplished composer and added to Indian film music his interpretations of Rabindra Sangeet. He scored music for films such as Anandmath, Nagin, Kohraa and Bees Saal Baad. In Nagin he used the clavichord played by Kalyanji to reproduce the sound of the snake charmer's been. The evergreen song Man dole mera tan dole... is one of the finest presentations by him.

Theme : Cinema, Music, Personality.

GOLDEN JUBILEE OF THE ASCENT OF MOUNT EVEREST BY

TENZING NORGAY AND EDMUND HILLARY

29.05.2003

1500

0.1 Million sheetlets

Mountaineering is essentially a modern sport that emerged into its own as late as the 18th century. The initial thrust was mostly from Britain; but in the late 19th century, the interest spread to France, Switzerland, the United States, New Zealand and other countries. The 1786 conquest of the



Mont Blanc, the highest peak in Western Europe, created ripples. Thereafter, many a challenging peak of the Alps, the Andes, and the Rockies fell to gritty climbers.

The awesome majesty of the snow-capped summits of the Himalayas always held a strange allure to the people of India, Nepal and Tibet. As the 20th century wore on, many expeditions were launched in the Himalayas and many of its peaks fell to ambitious explorers. But the tallest of them all Mount Everest, stood undefeated at an incredible height

of 8,848 metres. It was the expedition of 1953 led by Colonel John Hunt, a British army officer, that finally succeeded in reaching the summit. The two members of the team who would ascend the peak make the whole world proud were Tenzing Norgay, a determined sherpa mountaineer who hailed from Tami in Nepal and Edmund Hillary, a tough and amiable apiarist-turned climber from New Zealand.

The route chosen lay up the Khumbu Glacier and then up to long, rising valley of the Western Cwm to the face of Lhotse, a formidable peak itself, and up that to the south Col, at roughly 7,925m. Then a steep climb would lead up the South-East Ridge to the South Summit of the mountain, from which they hoped to gain the final summit. Finally, on the 29th of May, at 11.30 AM, they found themselves standing on the highest spot on earth.

The ascent of the Everest created word-wide sensation. Even today, after 50 years of the event, mankind looks back with pride at that momentous achievement. The courage, determination and restless energy of Tenzing and Hillary represents the obsessive curiosity of mankind to look beyond the known and search into the unknown.

Theme : Mountains, Adventure, Sports, Mountaining.

MUKTABAI

30.05.2003

500

0.4 Million



Muktabai (1279-1299) was one among the poet saints of Maharashtra who freed religion from the elitist monopoly of professional priests and took it to the masses. Her message was one of universal love and compassion.

Muktabai was the sister of Sant Dnyaneshwar, the first major poet of Marathi language and the founder of the cult of Vithoba. It is believed that she exerted a positive influence on Dnyaneshwar

in his literary and spiritual pursuits. Like the other poet saints of Maharashtra, the abhang was the favourite metre for Muktabai. She utilized the fluid symmetry of abhangs to convey spiritual and mystical ideas in the native language of Marathi. Through them she stirred the common village folk, including women and people of the lower strata of society, from their hapless existence and guided them to self-realization. In her hand, poetry became a form of shared religion that helped to create a spirit of universal fellowship. She is also believed to have inspired Lord Changdeva to write Tatvasaar, dealing with the spirituality of the Vedas. Though

devotional in nature, Muktabai's compositions had a deep personal touch. She was one among the few women to have excelled in poetry in the middle ages.

Muktabai is believed to have met with an untimely death while in her teens. Many devotees worship her today as a goddess.

Prominent works of Muktabai are Tatiche Abhanga and Advice to Changdeva which have secured her a permanent place in Marathi literature.

Theme : Saints, Poets, Hinduism.

GOVERNMENT MUSEUM, CHENNAI

19.06.2003

500,500,1500,

0.8 Million each

Museums in the modern sense were brought to India by the British with the setting up of the Indian Museum at Calcutta in 1814. However, fragments of the museum concept have always been there, as borne out by the picture galleries of pre-historic caves found in different parts of the country, particularly the likes of the Bhimbetka caves of Madhya Pradesh. These concepts evolved further through temple panels, stupas and chitrasalas (painting galleries), in the process giving rise to an idiom of visual communication that is typically Indian. Later, during the British period, much emphasis was laid upon the creation of museums.



The Government Museum, Chennai is one of the largest and oldest of India's museums and is considered an institution of excellence because of its varied collections, communicative galleries, conservation efforts and educational activities. Beginning as a museum of practical Geology in 1851, its scope



was extended considerably over the years to cover various fields of knowledge. Today the Chennai Museum is a large multipurpose museum cov-



ering a wide range of subjects and is organized into sections like Archaeology, Art, Anthropology, Numismatics, Zoology, Botany, Geology and Children's. There is a well-equipped Chemical Laboratory for the conservation of museum objects and an Education Section for carrying out the edu-

cational activities. The Design and Display Section organises the display work of the Museum.

The first stamp depicts Nataraja, a 12th century A.D. Bronze from Tanjavur district. The second stamp carries a picture of the century-old Museum Theatre, a heritage building in semi-circular shape with striking architectural features. A sculptured medallion (circa 150 A.D.) from Amravati figures on the third stamp, which tells a story related to king Bandhuma. The miniature sheet depicts some of the other remarkable exhibits of the museum also. The stamp sheetlets are illustrated with a picture of the National Art Gallery, Chennai, forming part of the Museum complex.

The Government Museum, Chennai presents to the people their own culture through various pieces of collective heritage, without removing the social context.

Theme : Heritage, Culture, Museums, Religion.

V.K. RAJWADE

23.06.2003

500

0.5 Million

Vishwanath Kashinath Rajwade (1863-1926), one among the pioneering historians of India, was a multifaceted personality who left his imprint in many other disciplines like Linguistics, Literature, Geography, Oleography and Sociology also.



V.K. Rajwade hailed from the Raigad district of Maharashtra. After completing his education in Pune, he took up the teaching profession and settled in Pune. The sad and untimely death of his wife in 1894 was a turning point in Rajwade's life. Overlooking the advice from different quarters to remarry, he decided to devote the rest of his life to the selfless pursuit of knowledge. Meticulous in his research and

prodigious in output, Rajwade wrote on a variety of subjects. However, he is remembered most for his path breaking work in historiography. His writings inspired many research scholars in Maharashtra and other parts of India to pursue the subject at a time when works of European historians dominated the academic discourses in Indian history. It is no exaggeration to say that his work revolutionized the way the subject of history was perceived in India and helped to advance an Indian view of history.

By founding the Bharat Itihas Sanshodhak Mandal at Pune in 1910, he institutionalised his research procedures. He also changed the way history was being researched by giving as much importance to nondocumental sources of history like costumes, articles of house hold use, buildings and works of art as was being given to written archival material like letters and manuscripts. He had highlighted the importance of folk literature and other oral evidences as useful historical sources much ahead of contemporary historians in most parts of the world. He had stressed five aspects in his research methodology, viz. collection of original historical records, preservation of records, examination and classification of records, edition and publications of records and interpretation of sources and writing of histories.

Theme : Personality, History, Historians.

BADE GHULAM ALI KHAN

30.06.2003

500

0.4 Million

An unquestioned genius, Bade Ghulam Ali Khan (1902-1968) was one of the greatest vocalists of the 20th century. He left an indelible imprint on Indian music, particularly the Patiala gharana.

Bade Ghulam Ali Khan received his initial musical training in the family itself, his father Ali Baksh Khan of Kasur, now in Pakistan, having been a reputed Dilruba player and his uncle, Kale Khan, an illustrious musician of the Patiala

gharana. Though he made his debut in 1939 at the All India Music Conference held in Calcutta, his first public concert in Bombay three-four years later proved to be the big break in his career. He literally took the country by storm and went ahead to endear himself to music lovers in different corners of the sub-continent. In 1958, he shifted from Lahore to settle in Bombay.

Though essentially an exponent of khayal 'gayaki', he also sang bhajans and thumris with equal perfection. Thus he created the Surmandal which was integral to his music.

Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan composed over a hundred khayals and thumris. He also composed their music and popularized them by singing them in various conferences, as well as by recording them. A complete mastery over the sargams was yet another aspect of his rare genius.

Khan Sahib was a man at peace with himself. He was warm, witty and wise, and those who had the privilege of knowing him could never forget his wonderful smile.

Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan was elected Fellow of Sangeet Natak Academy and was honoured by the President of India with the title of 'Padma Bhushan'. Vishwa Bharati University conferred the title of 'Doctor of Literature' on him.

The stamp portrays Khan Sahib in concert, with Surmandal in hand. The design of the First Day Cover with a picture of Kamran's baradari brings back memories of the days when he used to do riyaz on the banks of river Raavi.

Theme : Personality, Music, Musicians.



Children's Corner

THE PENNY BLACK WORLD'S FIRST STAMP

Dr. (Mrs) ANJALI DUTTA



When I began to collect stamps two decades ago the country I wanted to begin with was Great Britain, since it was the world's first country to issue adhesive stamps. As with me there are collectors all over the world who want at least one copy of the Penny Black simply because it is the world's first stamp.

The Penny Black and Penny Post were the brain child of Sir Rowland Hill often called the father of modern post office. The introduction of Penny Post revolutionized the letter service making it possible to send a letter anywhere in Britain for a standard pre-paid postage. In 1837 Sir Rowland Hill, a school master published a pamphlet entitled "Post Office Reform. Its Importance and practicability". In this he claimed that the true cost of delivering a letter from London to Edinburgh was only about 1/36 of

a penny. If the post office charged one penny postage on every letter, more people would write letters and the post office would make more profit. Helped by wide spread public support Hill eventually persuaded the post office to adopt his plan.

Until Rowland Hill introduced his reform the postage on a letter was usually paid by the person who received it, not by the person who posted it. The postman had the task of collecting the postage when he delivered the mail. Hill proposed that letters be prepaid either in cash at the post office or by prepaid letter sheets and envelopes and almost as an afterthought "a bit of paper just large enough to bear the stamps showing the tax had been paid and covered at the back with glutinous wash which the bringer of the letter might be applying a little moisture attach to the back".

There was initially much reluctance for such a proposal as postage rates were rather high. During the early part of the 19th Century postal charges rose rapidly and by the year 1814 a letter cost four pence for a distance of seven miles. Over seven miles and under fifteen miles the charges were six pence. At that time a labourer's wages was four pence a day. Further, members of parliament were entitled to free postage, which was much misused.

However as the public support for Rowland Hill's suggestions grew he was appointed to the Treasury on 16th September 1839 to begin work on postal changes. First reform was the introduction of uniform Penny postage on 5th December 1839, which was reduced to one Penny on 9th January 1840.

The Treasury invited the public to submit suggestions for the design of the gummed labels which Hill proposed that the post Office should issue at one Penny each.

More than 2000 suggestions were submitted but only 49 related to adhesive stamps. One suggestion from Benjamin Cheverton of Caiden Town answered the fears of Treasury officials that unscrupulous printer might be able to forge the labels and so defraud the post office. Cheverton suggested that the labels should bear "a female head of great beauty" because a portrait would be more difficult for forgers to copy than any other design. Award for innovative suggestions were made to Benjamin Cheverton, Henry Cole, Charles Whiting James Bogardus and Francis Coffin.

It was Rowland Hill's own suggestion which was developed into the finished design. It was the profile of queen Victoria based on a portrait made when she was an eighteen year old princess. It was also used on a medal designed by William Wyon which was struck for the occasion of Queen's first official entrance into the city of London in 1837.

Perkins Bacon & Petch Co, London who had been given the contract to print the adhesive stamp, commissioned the artist Henry Corbould to make a number of Profile drawing of the young Queen based on the Wyon medal. Charles and Frederick Heath, father and son, engraved the Queen's portrait for the production of the plate which contained 240 impressions.

The Penny Black the first ever adhesive postage stamp was issued on 1st May 1840 though it became valid for postage on 6th May 1840. Usages before this date is

known. It was issued in sheets of 240 (rows of 12). It had a water mark of small crown, and was black in colour. These stamps were not perforated and had to be cut and sold. The ink used for the printing consisted of lamp black in linsed oil. The gun was applied hot with brushes, whose colour valid and in some sheets were almost colourless. Total Plates used were eleven (Nos 1 to 11). About 72 Million stamps were issued remained valid for usage till 1841.

A special postmark was also introduced to cancel the stamps. Popularly known as the Maltese cross it is more correctly a cross pattee. It was to begin with, in black. But since it was difficult to see a black postmark on the black stamp the colour was changed to red in 1841.

It was a matter of concern that there was a possibility that the cancellation might be removed from the used adhesive stamp. Experiments were made to produce a black ink which could not be removed. On 21st July 1840, Rowland Hill wrote that one "Mr. Donovan a chemist of Dublin had succeeded in removing not only the black but also the red colour of the obliterating stamps. Eventually the solution was to change the colour of the stamp from black to red on 21st January 1841. 10,000 sheets of the Penny red were printed and issued to the public a month later.

Of the 72 million copies of Penny Black which were sold only 16800 were from plate II, which comes to just 700 sheets. These are the rarest of the Penny Black. Over 10 Million copies were printed from plate 1a/1b. Yet even a medium poor copy of a plate 1 stamp is expensive. Strip of Penny Black are scarce and block were scarce.

Forged Penny Blacks first appeared in 1840, which were crude counterfeits made from a wood engraving. An electrotyped forgery was discovered in March 1841, which led to the first prosecution and conviction for stamp forgery.

Hill's stamp system was eventually adopted in some form by every country starting with Brazil in 1843. It revolutionized the postal system in the world. As a bonus it also kicked off the world's most popular hobby philately.

(Courtesy : Souvenir, Poonapex 2001)



PATNA HANDSTRUCK POSTAGE STAMPS

by D. HAMMOND GILES M. B. E.

In the earliest period of the history of the East India Company, Patna was of importance to it in extending its trading, and a Factory was soon established near the town. This became noted for a massacre of Europeans by Meer Kassim in 1763, but reference to postal facilities there date much earlier. Peter Mundy (1628/34) records in his travels that letters were carried by cossids from Patna to Agra in 11 to 15 days.

Under the Warren Hastings postal reforms of 1774, the Postal System of Bengal was formed into four Divi-

sions, of which the second Division was from Calcutta to Patna, and the third was from Patna to Benares, "and to such further distances as may be hereafter determined".

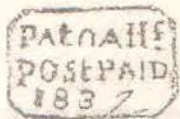
A letter is recorded with the Calcutta Bishopmark of 1777, addressed to Boyd Alexander of Patna, but this has no handstruck mark on it pertaining to Patna Post Office. However, in due course, a great number of handstruck postage stamps were introduced at this Post Office, the earliest of which being the 'PATNA/POST PAID' mark of 1785, to be followed by no less than another 14 marks to 1848, all of which were recorded in the 'Catalogue of Handstruck Postage Stamps of India'. At the time of publication, only one example had been recorded of the 'PATNA/H.PT.Pd' mark (Patna 7), but two more examples have now surfaced, and cover a period of 1826-29.

Dr. Wolfgang c. Hellrigl has now sent me a photostat copy of a 'native' cover with an unrecorded strike, which he says "is so poor that it is even difficult to decide which way is the right side up. It is dated October, 1832 and originated from Patna and addressed to Nepal". This is now illustrated below:-

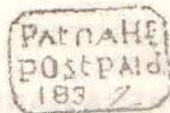


He goes on to say "As far as I can make out, the inscriptions are in three lines; the top line totally illegible; centre line; there are more words, or initials (H.Post?), at the far right there appears to be the word 'Paid'; the bottom line bears the date; apparently a fixed '183' with a manually added '2'".

After very careful study of the mark, and by 'cleaning' it up, I came up with two possibilities, shown as (A) and (B) -



(A)



(B)

I now believe that (B) is the more likely of the two, and is contemporary with my Patna 10 (PATNA/POST/PAID) which I recorded in use during 1832-35, and my reasoning for preference for (B) lies in the similarity of the type of letters used in its make-up and those in the 'Post Paid' mark, now illustrated:



It will be noted that the 'A's are all capital letters in both, but the 't' and the 'd' are small letters, and the 'n' in both stamps has a rounded top with no serif at the left hand top edge. The 'S' is also rather an elongated narrow letter.

I believe that in 1832 a fresh set of stamps was prepared for paid, Bearing, and Free, with a new 'PATNA/Hf/POST PAID/183'. If this is so, the previous 'PATNA/H.PT.Pd/18' stamp became redundant, but what is curious about the new stamp that replaced it, is the fact that the 'Hf' appeared in the top line with 'PATNA' and not in the second line before 'POST PAID'.

There is no doubt that this cover has produced evidence of a further handstruck stamp of Patna Post Office, and I hope that my illustration resembles it reasonably accurately, and I shall call this stamp 'PATNA 10a' for the record. Any comments or suggestions would be welcomed by me.

NOTE : In the 'Catalogue of the Handstruck Postage Stamps of India', I made a request that collectors who had material showing marks not recorded, or examples of earlier or later dates of use for those that had been recorded, would advise me of the extra information.

So far I have received advice of 57 marks not previously illustrated by me and a further 77 extensions of dates of use of items already listed. Out of the new marks, only 6, including the new Patna 10a, are pre-1837.

The bulk of the new advices have come from only a handful of collectors and I am sure that many members have covers with unrecorded marks or wider dates of their use, and I again appeal to everyone to examine their own collection and see if they can contribute some new information. A careful study of their material will, I am sure, produce a lot more information - please help - it is a worthwhile study, if only to be able to record that you have the 'earliest' or 'latest' or 'only example on record'! Such items tend to have a higher status and command a premium in auctions!

(Courtesy : India Study Circle 1986)



Our Second Sunday Meetings were held at the CPMG's Conference Hall, Anna Road, HPO, Chennai - 600 002. (10.30 - 12.30 pm) regularly where around 30 members attended with President Shri Balakrishna Das presiding. Patron Mr.G.Madan Mohan Das spoke on "Postal Stationaries" in June 2003.

Rivers of Bangladesh

Parvez Ali Anwar Khan

Bangladesh is a land of rivers. They have always been, and still are, an integral part of human existence. People depend on the rivers for every facet of their social, cultural, and economic life. The water is used for drinking, bathing and washing, fishing, irrigating fields, inland navigation, sports, and games. It is no wonder that the stamps of the country should also depict rivers and activities connected with them.

Bangladesh has a network of rivers that form an integral part of its countryside landscape. An example of a stamp having rivers as the principle subject of its design is shown (Scott 435).

Because of the many advantages provided by a river, villages and cities grow up by its side. Bangladesh is no exception, and many villages exist on the banks of rivers. In 1989 a se-tenant pair was issued to celebrate ten years of the activity of CIRDAP (Center for Integrated Rural Development in Asia and Pacific). A village with a boat plying in the adjacent river is shown on Scott 329-330.

Rivers provide inland water transport or inland navigation. Mechanized vessels, like steamers and launches, ply side by side with country-boats, carrying both passengers and cargo. Stamps issued in 1982 and 1987 highlight the old and the modern systems of inland water transport. Scott 169 depicts a sail boat loaded with jute, while Scott 298 pictures a paddle steamer.

Journey by river is comfortable and relaxing. Tourists who visit Bangladesh like to travel by river and enjoy the scenic beauty of the passing countryside. Age-old paddle steamers, refurbished with modern diesel engines, keep their antique appearances but providing modern facilities and comfort. They manage to give a feeling of nostalgia and living in the glorious past. One such steamer, nick-named 'The Rocket', is shown in a stamp (Scott 298) issued in 1987 (Figure 4).

Steamers and mechanized launches require landing pontoons and other facilities, which are provided by inland river terminals. The Inland Water Transport (IWTA) terminal at Dhaka, the capital of the country, is the largest in Bangladesh. The terminal is depicted on Scott 236, one of ten definitive stamps on communication issued in 1983.

Bangladesh is still one of the world's least developed countries. Although steamers and other mechanized vessels ply in the inland rivers, the bulk of the water-borne traffic is provided by country boats, which have no engines; they move by the help of oars or sails. A conservative estimate indicates that there are about a million of these boats which carry three times the cargo transported by mechanically propelled vessels. Many stamps of Bangladesh depict such boats. In 1983, the World Com-

munication Year was marked by a set of three stamps, one of which (Scott 230) depicts, among other modes of transport, a country boat in full sail.

The waterways of Bangladesh are appropriately used for carrying mails within the country. Stamps highlighting this activity include a set of two stamps (Scott 183-184) plus a souvenir sheet (Scott 184a) issued on the occasion of the International Stamp Exhibition, held at London in 1980.

Some remote areas in Bangladesh are inaccessible by road or railway and boats are the only means to carry mails to those areas. A stamp (Scott 234) shows a postman stepping into a mailboat that is beached upon a river's bank. Overprinted with the word "Service," it (Scott 037) was also issued for official use.

Not only country boats, but launches also carry post office mails. One of these is depicted by a stamp (Scott 592), one of a set of four, and a souvenir sheet, issued to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the Universal Postal Union in 1999.

Other Uses of Rivers

Bangladesh is principally an agricultural country, mainly producing crops like jute, rice, and sugar-cane. The cornfields are usually located close to the river banks in order to facilitate their irrigation. A stamp (Scott 206) was issued in 1981 in honor of the World Food Day and depicts a river flowing through, and irrigating, cornfields.

The rivers are the habitat of all kinds of fish, and people depend upon fish as a cheap source of protein. Fishing is not only a pastime; it is a means of livelihood. The first definitive set issued by Bangladesh in 1973 includes a stamp (Scott 54) showing a boat netting fish in a river. In 1975, the motif was repeated in a redrawn stamp, which replaced the English "TA" (for taka), with its equivalent Bengali symbol (Scott 84). The popular design reappeared in 1976 in a smaller sized stamp (Scott 105) along with its overprinted sister (Scott 025) for official use.

Rowing is a popular sport in Bangladesh which has come down through the ages. Competitions are a regular feature on festive occasions and national holidays. Commonwealth Day in 1983 was commemorated by the issue of a set of four stamps, one (Scott 217) of which pictures an ongoing rowing match. A set of four stamps issued in 1990 on the occasion of the Asian Games at Beijing, China, depicts rowing (Scott 374). Another stamp (Scott 452), issued in 1994, includes rowing as one of a number of activities in which the people take part during folk festivals.

Through the ages, rivers have always been used as a means of disposing of waste. This practice pollutes the water and the environment. In recent years, measures to remove pollution have become an active world issue and in 1982 a UN Environment Program was launched to address the problem. A 50 paisa stamp (Scott 207) was issued on the occasion. In 1986, the same stamp was over-

printed with the words "SAARC SEMINAR '86" and issued (Scott 281) on the occasion of a Seminar on Postal Mechanization, attended by member countries of the South Asian Association of Regional Co-operation (SAARC). The stamps show a flowing river in all its natural serenity.

Rivers and boats have such a great influence upon the children of Bangladesh that they often draw and paint them. One of them has appeared as a motif for a stamp on children's paintings (Scott 530).

Bangladesh is a comparatively newborn country and has not issued too many stamps. Even so, an idea of the influence the rivers have upon the life of the people can be found on their postal issues.

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(Courtesy : Topical Time 2000)



INDIAN ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION

(Contd.)

PART II

S. S. BASAN

FOURTH INDIAN SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION

The fourth Expedition comprised 12 members and sailed from Mormugao port, Goa on board FINNPOLARIS at 6.30 AM on 4th December 1984. Dr. B. B. Bhattacharya was the leader of the team. He was the head of Department of Geophysics at school of Mines, Dhanbad, Bihar state (a state rich in iron ore, coal and mica.) This expedition had D. K. Pandey of Institute of Petroleum Exploration, Dr. Gopal Swaroop Mittal of Geophysical Research Institute, Hyderabad, Dr. Sisinthy Shivaji of Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Dr. M. Satya Kumar of Indian Meteorological Department, Dr. Asutosh Singh of Amateur Radio Association, Dr. D. A. Dabholakar of Sri Ram Institute for Industries Research. One Mauritius scientist, Dr. Seewant Bhoojedhur of university of Mauritius also joined the team at Port Louis, Mauritius. The team had two West German Engineers. Expedition carried scientific investigations in glaciology, geophysics, biology of Krill. The reconnaissance and logistics was looked after as in the earlier expeditions by Indian Navy and Air Force personnel.

Lt Col J. K. Bajaj of Army told that engineers had built also field stations consisting 3 cottages on rocks of Dakshin Gangotri Hills to accommodate 12 persons. Lt. Col Bajaj is an experienced mountaineer and hang gliding expert. He along with other 5 members surveyed and worked out alternate

routes for a fuel dump station for the 6000 km long trip to South Pole in 1985. Bajaj is at present Principal, Nehru Institute of Mountaineering, Uttarkashi. He became the first Indian to reach South Pole on ski along with other 10 members of the International Expedition in 1988-89.

This expedition also brought the first 12 member winter-over team headed by Lt. Col. S. S. Sharma. This team left behind a 13 member party to remain in the winter led by Col. P. Kumaresh. Earlier the 5 member team including LT. COL Bajaj of this expedition which had completed the reconnaissance survey to estimate logistic requirements for the expedition to South Pole from Dakshin Gangotri, their survey revealed that the attempt via Wholthat mountain was not feasible, with the existing resources and capabilities. The expedition to S. Pole was postponed for the time being.

The covers of this expedition have the following postmarks and cachets:-

- Cancelled at Panaji, Goa when it came back on 25.3.85.
- Box type cachet in black ink and Antarctica map in a circle at the left in the same cachet.
- Autograph of the leader, B. B. Bhattacharya with a rubber stamp impression in black post office ink.
- Another cachet with wordings-Carried to Antarctica with two penguins at both sides holding the cachet in their beaks. The wording is also in Hindi.
- Autographs of the 12 members of the first winter over team with rubber stamp impression in violet ink of the leader S. s. Sharma also the Third expedition cachet in violet ink.
- Covers posted at Port Louis, Mauritius while stopping on return, cancelled with box type ship cachet. Also round ship cachet in violet ink.

Fourth Indian Antarctic Expedition Covers with Ship MS Finn polaris Round cachets Exp'n cachets, cancelled with Ship cachets (26.1.85). Posted at Port Louis, Mauritius and Autographed by Ship Captain.

FIFTH INDIAN SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION

The 87 member expedition under the leadership of M. K. Kaul, a glaciologist of Geological Survey of India, sailed abroad Swedish M S THULELAND on 30th November 1985. The earlier four expeditions had a halt at Port Louis, Mauritius, while going to and from Antarctic but starting with this expedition no expedition anchored here. This was being done to save time.

There were 24 scientists from 13 disciplines. 61 service men are taking part to lend assistance to scientists. The team is entrusted with performing experiments on geological exploration, the study of micro - organism.

This team had 9 members who had been members of earlier Antarctic expeditions. They include Dr. (Ms.) Aditi Pant of National institute of Oceanography, Mr. Kaul and

Dr. V. K. Dhargalkar also. There was second lady member in the team, Ms. Gowri Indresen, a topper of Indian Institute of Technology at Madras.

The covers of this expedition have the following post-

marks and cachets:-

Post marked on arrival from Antarctica at Panaji on 24.3.86. Another cancellation stating that this cover was carried to Antarctica. Fifth India Expedition 1985-86.

Rubber stamp cachet of the expedition in black ink along with Antarctica map on left, penguin, a bird.

Dakshin Gangotri round cachet, big size, Some covers have smaller size cachet of the same design.

Rubber stamp cachet in three lines of M S THULE LAND. Antarctica Expedition 1985-86. in blue ink.

Autographs of the scientists, leader, also winter-over team leader.

Fifth Indian Antarctic Cover with Exp'n cachet, Ship cachet and posted at Delhi.

Fifth Indian Antarctic Exp'n Cover with round Dakshin Gangotri cachet cancelled at Panaji on arrival on 24.3.86.

SIXTH INDIAN SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION

This expedition was comprised of 90 members and led by Dr. Arun H. Parulekar, a leading Oceanographic biologist of National Institute of Oceanography, Goa, left Panaji on 26th November 1986 on chartered Swedish ice breaker M V THULELAND. The leader was also a member of the first Indian expedition. Like the Fifth Expedition, this also did not anchor at Port Louis, Mauritius.

The research activities were largely confined to the Queen Maud land area in the vicinity of India's permanent scientific station, Dakshin Gangotri, the Schirmchar and Wolthat mountain ranges and the Antarctica Ocean. The objective of the expedition primarily related to geophysics, geology, meteorology and geomagnetism biological sciences.

The expedition returned on 22nd March 1987 bringing back

INDIAN SCIENTIFIC ANTARCTIC EXPEDITIONS

(IN NUT SHELL)

| Exp'n No. | LEADER | No. of Members | Sailed on | Stoppage | Reached on | Ship Engaged | Winter-over LEADER | Team No. of Men | Reached Back |
|-----------|------------------------|----------------|-----------|-----------------------------|------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Dr. S. Z. Qasim | 21 | 6.12.1981 | Port Louis, Mauritius | 9.1.1982 | Polar Circle | No Winter Team | - | 21.2.1982 |
| 2 | Dr. V. K. Raina | 28 | 3.12.1982 | 10-13.12.82 | 28.12.1982 | " | " | - | 21.3.1983 |
| 3 | Dr. H. K. Gupta | 81 | 3.12.1983 | Port Louis | 27.12.83 | Finn Polarics | Lt. Col. S. S. Sharma | 12 | 29.3.1984 |
| 4 | Dr. B. B. Bhattacharya | 82 | 4.12.1984 | " | 28.12.84 | " | Col. P. Kumaresh | 13 | 25.3.1985 |
| 5 | Dr. M. K. Kaul | 87 | 30.11.85 | No Stoppage from this exp'n | 24.12.85 | Thuleland | Dr. Vinod K. Dhargalkar | 14 | 24.3.1986 |
| 6 | Dr. A. R. Parulekar | 90 | 26.11.86 | " | " | " | " | 15 | 22.3.1987 |
| 7 | Dr. Rabin Sengupta | 90 | 25.11.87 | " | 21.12.87 | " | Col. V. S. Iyer | 15 | 26.3.1988 |
| 8 | Dr. Amitava Sengupta | 100 | 27.11.88 | " | " | " | Col. P. Ganesan | 15 | 26.3.1988 |
| 9 | Dr. Rasik Ravindran | 81 | 30.11.89 | " | 27.12.89 | Thuleland and Polarbjorn | " | 15 | 3.3.90/ 27.3.90 |
| | Dr. V. K. Raina | 21 | 3.12.89 | " | " | " | " | 15 | 8.3.1990 |

the 14 member wintering team headed by scientist Dr. Vinod Dhargalkar, of National Institute of Oceanography, Goa. The expedition mail which was taken by the team to Antarctica were impressed with cachets and autographed few of them. It was post marked at Panaji on return on 22.3.87.

Covers of this expedition have the following:-

- Post mark of Panaji - 22.3.87.
- Violet ink stamp stating carried to Antarctica "in English and Hindi.
- Round mail cachet of sixth Indian Antarctic Expedition. Dakshin Gangotri. 70° 05' S, 12° 00' E. with a map of Antarctica on left and with two penguins.
- Autographs of the leader, Dr. A. H. Parulekar.

SEVENTH INDIAN SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION

This expedition was headed by Dr. R. Sengupta of National Institute of Oceanography and sailed from Mormugao port, Goa on 25th November 1987 at 5.30 Am on Swedish ice breaker M V THULELAND. Reached Antarctica on 21st December 1987 at 1.30 a.m. The expedition continued the geological studies in the Humbolt massif of Wholthat mountains. They also under took an airborne magnetic survey of Gruber massif and the low snow bound areas between Schirmcher and Wholthat ranges to delineate the sub glacial geology of the region and assessed its mineral potential. Geomagnetic field was also investigated. The magnetosphere storms were also investigated. The early study initiated on the "OZONE HOLE" was also studied. This was earlier studied in collaboration with nearby USSR, East Germany, Japan stations.

This expedition also laid the foundation pillars near the shore for another station named "MAITRI" (which means FRIENDSHIP in Hindi).

The expedition had penetrated deeper into Antarctica and airborne geomagnetic studies for mineral surveys were conducted. These studies are considered of great importance as the work would enable India to claim a resource share in the mineral regime at Antarctica. Investigation on distribution and variability of living organism especially krill; squid and fish were carried out.

For the first time a Post Office was opened on 26.1.88 at Dakshin Gangotri. Mr. G. Sudhakar Roa, a meteorologist was appointed as Post Master. Covers of this expedition have the following post marks and cachets:-

- Box type Post mark in Hindi and English with date 26.1.88, on the Indian Republic Day. Some covers have the date as 1.1.88. Some are - having reimpressed date 26.1.88 on 1.1.88.
- Round cachet of the station, small and in blue ink.
- Practically all the covers are autographed on the back by the leader of the expedition as well as Post master, with their identity in violet ink.
- Round THULELAND ship cachet in blue ink.

EIGHTH INDIAN SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION

The expedition was led by Dr. Amitava Sengupta, 35 years old from National Physical Laboratory, New Delhi and sailed on Swedish ice breaker, M V THULELAND on 28th November 1988. This is the fourth year for this ice-breaker chartered by Department of Ocean Development.

It had 100 members, of which 80 were from armed forces. The army team consisted 40 officers and others lead by Col. S. Jagannathan. Out of this 29 were from the Corps of Engineers. They built a new station named "MAITRI" (70° 45', 39.4S, 11° 44, 48.6E) on the hard rocks of the Schirmchar Hills range roughly 70 km from Dakshin Gangotri and near the shore. The ground work of foundation of this station was already carried out by the seventh expedition. This same group of sappers had built earlier "DAKSHIN GANGOTRI" in 1983.

The expedition had a camera man from the Film Division of the government of India, to record the building work of the station and other work. Scientists were from National Geophysical Institute, the Indian Institute of Geomagnetism, National Institute of Oceanography, the Indian Meteorological Institute and staff of Osmania University, Hyderabad.

Mr. D. G. Russel, a meteorologist was entrusted the job of the Postmaster besides scientific studies. The covers from this expedition have a round post mark (Dakshin Gangotri in English and Hindi, date 26.1.89 in horizontal in the middle, a cachet of the 8th Expedition, ship cachet autographs of the Post master, Leader of the Expedition also of the captain of the ship. There are also few covers with cachets of Russian base Novolazarevskaya, East German station Georg Forster, Ozone Depletion research, Round Dakshin Gangotri station cachet, autograph of Col. P. Ganesan, station commander Winter over team of D. Gangotri.

An official cover with a coloured cachet, issued by Department of Ocean Development.

NINTH INDIAN SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION

The Ninth Indian Scientific Antarctic Expedition had left for Antarctica on 30th November 1989 from Mormugao port, Goa on M V THULELAND, ice breaker under the leadership of Dr. Rasik Ravindra of Geological Survey of India. It consisted of 81 members. It reached on 27th December 1989 and after completing its assignment returned back to Goa on 27th March 1990. From this expedition, Dakshin Gangotri, Indian's first permanent station will be abandoned and used as a supply base only in summer season. It will not be permanent as it is sitting on ice shelf and has started drifting. According to Department of Ocean Development (DOD), future scientific activities will be centred around permanent station at 'MAITREE', which is located on rocky terrain. This expedition included for the first time a scientist from the Zoological Survey of India, Calcutta named Dr. Ashok Kumar Hazra. Dr. Hazra Collected some Adelie Penguin skeletons, rocks from near the glacier at Schirmachar hills for studies. Zoological Survey of India will also send Dr. Srikumar Chatterjee, Officer-in-charge, Wildlife and conservation to Antarctica in the forthcoming expedition. There were also two lady scientists and one of them was Dr. Sudipta Sengupta, a geologist from Jadavpur University, and also a member of the third Indian Expedition.

Keys to Indian Postal History

PART - I

Brig D.S. Virk

Ninth Expedition successfully accomplished all tasks assigned to it in the field of earth and atmosphere sciences, astrophysics, biology and polar medicine, Prof. (Dr.) M. G. K. Menon, the minister of state for science and Technology told the Lok Sabha, after the arrival of the expedition. He further stated, the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) aimed at placing Indian Remote Sensing (IRS) class satellite in Polar Sun-Synchronous orbit was estimated to a cost of Rs. 414.96 crores to the department.

For the first time in the history of Indian Antarctic Expeditions, there was a tragedy with this expedition. Four of its members who were on a geological survey died of inhalation of carbon monoxide gas while they were sleeping in the prefabricated tent in the Humbolt Mountain range. They were Dr. V K Srivastva (33), youngest of the four, a specialist in Kimberlites, a form of mica: B. K. Sharma (46), an expert in mapping the Himalayas. He had also accompanied earlier few expeditions : A K Bedi (42), a geophysicist, specialist in geophysical survey of Himalayan glaciers. The fourth member who died was M C Joshi, a naval communication personal. Their bodies were later on brought in a Soviet aircraft on 15 February 1990.

As earlier stated by Dr. V K Gaur, now secretary of Department of Ocean Development, that India's immediate intention is not of exploration of minerals but to get all data for future if we are called upon to take decision. Keeping this in view India had further intensified their research for minerals. The rocks found near the station were similar to those found in South India.

There was another group of 21 members besides the first contingent of 81 members which left Mormugao port on 3rd December 1989 on M V POLARBJORN, a Norwegian ice-breaker, under the leadership of Dr. V K Raina of Geological Survey of India. He was also the leader of the Second Indian Antarctic Expedition in 1982-83. It explored the area near Weddell Sea for future temporary or permanent bases, as well as it carried out geological surveys and other scientific studies. It returned to Goa on 8 March 1990.

The covers from the first group which I have received are most disappointing. All the covers have only Dakshin angotri (Round type) cancellation in Hindi and English dated 3.2.1990 along with a box type seal of MAITRI B O in Hindi and English without any date. Not a single cover which I have with me, is having any other cachets of ship or expedition or any autograph of any member of the team.

The second team which went to Weddell Sea on M V POLARBJORN, I have its official printed cover with ship's round cachet showing a bear and another bigger one, oval shaped cachet in black ink showing ship, with wordings 'Indian Antarctic Expedition 1989/90 on top and Reiber Shipping A/S and M/V Polarbjorn at bottom and the cover has a cancellation of Panaji 9.3.90 after the teams arrival. This cover was sent to me by Mr. P S Singh, Department of Ocean Development.

This cover is from second group which went to WEDDELL SEA for exploration of area for future installation of bases as well as for geological survey.

(Courtesy : Jampex 1991)



1. To the philatelists, Postal History is a collection of postal covers and allied materials, the markings on which unfold or illustrate some aspects of the story of postal communications. What they are looking for are such things as postage rates, postal routes and carriers, time taken by the post, postal procedures and markings affecting the different postal facilities offered to the public and other matters of post office organisation. However, markings on the covers are not always easy to decipher and in any case they may not tell the whole story. The ordinary collector is not equipped to deduce the postal stories from his covers and he therefore depends upon the written or spoken words of the so-called experts.

2. But what sources do the experts tap to dig their information? First they garner the accumulated learning of their forerunners contained in printed works and published articles. In my study of Indian Postal History I have benefitted from the writings of Hamilton, Clarke, Sams, Renouf, Robson Lowe, Giles, Jal Cooper, Mulk Raj Anand (or rather his contributors as his was only a cosmetic job) and Martin. In the same quest I have also delved into old and new Indian and British journals, newsletters and souvenirs. This however is the easy part. The difficult and more rewarding task is to find new information from old records, be these in archives, offices or libraries. For some weeks past I have been savouring the precious holdings of the Central Library of the Departments of Posts and Telegraphs in New Delhi. For Postal History purposes the source materials cover the period from 1854 to the present day and consist of Circulars, Manuals, Guides, Lists and Reports. I give below the scope and range of these key sources upto the First World War and the gaps which frustrated my study but which may easily be filled, by departmental or philatelic efforts by searches in other archives, libraries or offices in India or in England.

Circulars and General Orders.

3. As is natural for the head of a country-wide organisation, instructions or information of general application were passed by the Director General of the Post Office of India to his regional Postmasters General and other subordinates in the form of similar or Circular letters. Upto May 1858 these letters were issued with the common serial numbers assigned to all office correspondence. The separate numbering of circular letters, or the Post Office Circulars as we know them, begins with Circular No.1 dated 12th May 1858 and from then on runs in consecutive yearly numbers beginning from April and ending in March. At first the Circulars mixed instructions, information and orders in the same series with matters of public interest being annexed to them as Public Notices which were also published in the papers and distributed free to the public. In 1886-1887 Circulars pertaining to non-operational matters such as Discipline, Organisation or Statistics were issued in a separate series called the General Orders of D.G. P.Os. Almost all the important Circulars and General Orders were in due course incorporated either in the Manual or in the Postal Guide or in a

collection of unincorporated Extant Circulars and General Orders which was at first kept in a guard book and later printed as a reference book. The Circulars and General Orders continued to be issued as and when necessary. In 1909 the ad hoc Circulars were converted into a Weekly Circular in which one or more separate items were included under distinguishing numbers. On the amalgamation of the Posts and Telegraphs Departments in 1914, the Circulars of the D.G. Posts and Telegraphs were issued in separate series for three branches, Post Office, Telegraph Office and Telegraph Engineering.

4. Of all the sources of Indian Postal History the Circulars are undoubtedly the most important source as they not only provide contemporary information on services and procedures, they also paint a picture of the day to day concerns of the Post Office Department. For the earlier years there are serious gaps in the holdings of the Central Library which I give below:-

| Circulars | | Nothing before 1858 | |
|-----------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|
| 1860-1861 | 1861-1862 | 1862-1863 | 1863-1864 |
| 1864-1865 | 1865-1866 | 1866-1867 | 1867-1868 |
| 1872-1873 | 1878-1879 | 1880-1881 | 1884-1885 |

General Orders

| | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1892-1893 | 1896-1897 |
|-----------|-----------|

The Manual

5. The Postal Commission appointed in 1854 to report on the working of the Indian Post Office, recommended, among other things, that "a manual of instructions be supplied to the Postmasters". Apparently the applicable rules, regulations and procedures had not till then been consolidated into a handy book of reference. The recommendations of the Commission resulted in the Post Office Act of 1854, and the first Post Office Manual was compiled in 1854 and published in 1855. A new edition of the Post Office Manual was sent to the PMGs on 10th July 1858 and the DG said in the accompanying letter "I shall be obliged by your calling in and destroying or selling as waste paper all the copies of the former edition." I have seen neither of these editions of the Manual as no copies are held in the Postal Directorate Library. How many more editions of this publication were published between 1858 and 1872 is also not known to me but some must have been as in the preface to "Numbers in early Indian Cancellations", the author D.R. Martin, gives thanks to Mr. John Forrest for the loan of the Postal Manual containing the 1860 list of Post Offices. A revised and enlarged Manual entitled, "The Indian Post Office Manual containing instructions for Postal Officers and specimens of forms used in the Department", was published in 1873 under the editorship of two eminent Postal Officers, Mr. E.R. Douglas and Mr. Philip Sheridan. This handy book of 18 chapters covered all branches of Post Office work including the newly formed Railway Mail Service then known as the Travelling Post Office. The subjects of 7 of the supplements included Foreign Post; P.O. Buildings; Rules for the Custody of Postage Labels; Passenger services; Mail Cart

establishments; and Bullock Train agents. The second edition of the Manual was issued in 1881 in two volumes. Volume I contained the rules and Volume II the List of Forms and the Post Office Act of 1866. Unfortunately the Postal Library only has Volume II.

6. In 1883, the Manual was proposed to be divided into four Volumes as follows:-

Vol I - Head Postmaster's Handbook.

Vol II - Sub Postmaster's Handbook including Village Offices and Railway Receiving Offices.

Vol III - Controlling Officer's Handbook.

Vol IV - Rules for DLOs, Stock Depots and PMG's Offices, etc.

7. Volume I, 3rd Edition, was issued in November 1883, and further editions were issued in 1892 (when it became Head Office Handbook), 1896, and 1905. In 1912, a new Volume I was issued combining the Head Office and Sub Office Handbooks.

8. The first edition of Volume II entitled Sub Postmaster's Handbook was published in 1885. The second edition issued in 1888 was renamed Sub Office Handbook and further editions were printed in 1892, 1896, 1899, 1902 and 1908.

9. Volume III of the Manual was first issued in 1889 with the title "Supervising Officers' Handbook". Further editions were printed in 1895, 1898, 1902 and 1909. In 1916, the Supervisory Officers Handbook became Volume II of the new services.

10. The Railway Mail Service Handbook was first issued in July 1882. Its three parts consisted of Sorters Handbook, Record Clerks and Supervising Officers and these were followed by a List of Forms used in the R. M. S. In the 1883 scheme of the Manual division, Volume IV was reserved for D.L. Os etc. In 1887 this unfilled slot was given to the 2nd edition of the Railway Mail Service Handbook. Further editions of this Volume IV were published in 1891, 1897 and 1911.

11. In 1895 the Appendices containing instructions and information on matters not covered by or removed from Volumes I to IV were published in a separate Volume, number v. Three further editions of this compilation were printed in 1899, 1908 and 1915.

12. The Posts and Telegraphs Departments were amalgamated in 1914 but it took some year before the Manuals of the two Departments were rationalised and renumbered in a new series of Posts and Telegraphs Manuals which, if I remember right, went upto eleven volumes.

13. The rules and procedure of the Foreign Post branch of the Department were upto 1886, covered by a Foreign Post Memorandum, which was only issued to the few post offices doing foreign post work and the concerned officers. In 1886 a Foreign Post Handbook was issued, on the lines of other Handbooks. Its next edition in 1895 was named Foreign Post Manual. The third edition was issued in 1905. The P & T Library only has the Handbook, but no copies of the Memoranda or the Manual.

14. The need for special rules and regulations for the Field Post Offices was felt only after the Egypt Expedition of 1882. The Field Service Departmental Code was first issued in 1888 and a revised edition was published in 1894. (According to Hamilton there also was issued a field Service Manual (Postal) in 1890). The Library does not have any of these publications and I have not seen them elsewhere. The Library however does have the first edition of Postal Manual (War) issued by the Army in 1911. The Library also has a copy of the Telegraph Phrase Code for FPOs issued, I presume in about 1904: (There may have been earlier copies of the Telegraph Message Code for civil Post Offices but the Library only has one for 1928. The code consisted of stock words lengthy service telegrams).

15. Though the rules applicable to R. M. S. Sorters and Branch Postmasters were contained in Volume II and IV respectively, these were also published separately from the eightys for the convenience of the sorters and Branch Postmasters. In 1913, a new "Rules for the Branch Office" was published as a part of the Post Office Manual set.

Indian Postal Guide

16. The first Postal Guide was issued unofficially by a senior Postal Officer in about 1860. In Circular No 51 of 20th December 1858, the Director General asked all PMGs to furnish complete lists of Post Offices as it was intended to have the list of Post Offices printed off in Calcutta for transmission to London and for embodiment also in an Indian Post Office Guide. The editor was Mr. C. K. Dove and a copy of his Guide is held by the National Archives of India (but not by the P & T Library) but, being too brittle it is not issued to the researchers. The only unofficial Postal Guide available in the P & T Library is the 5th edition (1867) of the one compiled by another Postal Officer, Mr. F. J. Jordan, Mail Superintendent Jubbulpore. It is more a year book than a Postal Guide as may be seen from the list of its contents, which are-Map of India; counting House calender for 1867-68; Calender for XIX Century; Dates of departure of Home and Colonial Mail from Bombay and Calcutta for 1867-1868; Schedule of postage for India, Home and Foreign Countries; Notes on Chief Postage Rules; Time of transit of letters, papers etc; Home and Foreign Country routes by sea etc; Abstract of the PO Act; Indian Post Office Statistics; English Post Office Statistics; Govt Telegraph Department; Rules and rates of Indian Money Order Service; Railways-Rates and Regulations; Homeward route via Central India and Bombay; Rates for Govt Van and mail Carts etc; Dak Bearer Service; Dak Company; Travellers Bungalows in North West Provinces and Punjab etc; Steam Navigation Company; The English Directory; The Revenue; Indian Law Acts; Directions for making a will; Masonic Calender; Pay tables; and Weights and Measures. So the book had everything except the List of Post Offices. Price Re 1/8 annas.

17. The title of the first official publication was, "Indian Postal Guide containing The chief Public Regulations of the Post Office with other information. April 1, 1869." Its contents were more to the point-Chief Officers; Executive Privilage of the Post Office; Inland Post; Postage stamps; List of Indian POs; District Post; Foreign Post; Official Correspondence; Registration; Time tables of Mail Steam-

ers; Govt Bullock Tram; Passenger Service; Money Orders; and Telegraph Department. Price the same Re 1, annas 8. The basic contents of the Guide remained intact throughout the period under review though all non postal information was gradually eliminated and more information likely to be of use to the public and postal counter clerks was inserted in it. The Mail Steamer Calender was published separately from 1873 at 2 annas a copy.

The price was raised to 4 annas in 1875 but I have seen no copies of it. By 1914, the small booklet costing Re 1, annas 8 had grown into big book available to the public at a nominal price of 4 annas.

18. Right from the beginning the Guide was serially numbered. It began as a quarterly publication but became yearly in 1870. Its price was reduced in April 1873 to Re. 1. In 1879 it became six monthly and the price was reduced to 8 annas. The price was reduced further to 4 annas in August 1880. From 1898 three editions were issued each year. Thus the serial ran as far as the 74th Edition in January 1907. From the next issue the year of print (39th in this case) was mentioned on the title page with the yearly serial number below it. By 1910, the Guide reverted to its original scheme of quarterly editions. Fortunately barring a few editions all officials guides are available in the P & T Library. The missing editions are for 1885, 1886, 1887, 1888 and 1902 and the one for 1899 is in a tattered condition.

19. Two small booklets extracted from the Postal Guide are also worth mentioning though they contain no new information for the researcher. The first is "Indian Postal Abstract", which was first published in 1882/83 and was sold at post office at 1/2 anna per copy. It was the equivalent of the later day Pocket Postal Guide. It was also translated in local languages and supplied to Branch Postmaster not familiar with English. The other was a smaller booklet "Abstract of Postal Information" which was distributed free to the public.

(Courtesy : Signet 1986)



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