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CENSORED
COVERS 29

BIRDS
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EDITORIAL

"Olden days are golden days"

At last India Post has determinedly decided to give happiness to the collectors / philatelists as much as what they used to give few decades back.

Long long ago, so long ago, during the sixties, seventies and eighties of the last century, we used to come to the philatelic bureau on the day of issue of a commemorative, wait for a few hours - if we are late in arriving at the bureau - standing in a long queue and get our quota of stamp and first day cover. We used to get the thrill of receiving a fresh mint stamp and the feel of having an asset in our possession on the first day of issue itself. It used to be a day of meeting our friends, seniors in the hobby and a day of get togethers. Of course, those days we will not get the T day cancellation, after the T day of issue. But through advance press releases, we were in a position to know the date of issue exactly.

Now things have changed a lot and we can get the T day cancellation even after the expiry of the month of issue from philatelic bureau in person and also we have a "facility" to get a cancelled first day cover, "after many many days" through the 'Philatelic Deposit Account'.

But ... in practice, nowadays we are far away from getting a stamp and a proper first day - cover with stamp and cancellation - on the day of issue. Technology has advanced, communication has quickened, distances have shrunk but our happiness of acquiring new commemoratives with first day covers on the date of issue is more or less lost. We are in a sad state of affairs in not knowing a date of issue in advance, in not getting a stamp on the date of issue, in not getting a stamp along with a cancelled first day cover, in not getting all the stamps if the issue is a set having four / six stamps and not getting one if we come to the bureau a few days late - after knowing about the issue through friends - etc. etc. Our requirement through p.d a/c also reaches our hand after we have lost the memory of an issue.

Hence, I conclude and come to the first sentence in the beginning that India Post wants us to set the clock back a few decades and go to the pattern of last century and visit the philatelic counter everyday - to get issues

continuously - as much as possible and be a perennial searcher for new issues of our motherland so that we have the same amount of happiness as that of the collector of the last century.

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STAMP BOOKLETS

A stamp booklet is defined as "Small panes of stamps bound together in card covers, often with sheets of interleaving bearing commercial advertising". They were pioneered by Luxemburg in 1895 and first issued in Britain in 1904.



Booklets are often made up from sheets specially printed for this purpose, with a narrow selvaige at one side of each page for binding.... Today in Britain a large percentage of stamps are sold in stamp books or booklets, through shops, garages and supermarkets as from post offices. (Courtesy. Gibbous Stamp Monthly 2003).

Monthly Second Sunday Meetings

With President
Mr. G. Balakrishna Das on the Chair,
23 members attended the meeting on
11.04 .2010. Mr. D.H. Rao spoke on
"Special covers on Naval exercises".

STAMP NEWS

16 PUNJAB (2ND PATIALA)

19.03.10

500

0.3 mill

16 Punjab's (Patiala) history represents the legacy of honour, courage and devotion to duty, distinguishing itself in all fields of endeavour.

The battalion was raised in 1710 in "Dehra formation" by Baba Ala Singh, who was the founder of Patiala State. It was reorganized by Maharaja Sahib Singh in 1819 and again in 1892, being designated as the 2nd Imperial Service Infantry. Later, in 1920, the Battalion was renamed as '2nd Patiala Infantry'. The Unit was again renamed as '2nd Patiala Yadvindra Infantry' by Hon. Lieutenant General His Highness Maharaja Sir Yadvindra Singh of Patiala.



Pre - Independence, the Battalion saw gallant action during the 2nd Afghan War, the South African War 1900 - 1901, 1st World War and IInd World War and was awarded 15 Battle Honours. Post - Independence, after joining the 26 Indian Division as its Reconnaissance Battalion initially, it was amalgamated with the Indian Army in 1951, and was redesignated as 16 Punjab (Patiala).

Since Independence, the Battalion has actively participated in Indo - Pak War (1965 & 1971), in counter insurgency operations such as Raji, Orchid, Mahan Kartavya (1979), Rakshak (1990-93), Vijay (1999), Rhino (1999-2003) and Rakshak (8th October 2005 to 28 September, 2007)

During the 1965 Indo - Pak War, the Battalion took part in the capture of 'Barki' in Lahore sector - and was awarded Battle Honour 'BARKI'.

Theme : Army, Armed forces, Punjab, Patiala State

MUTHURAMALINGA SETHUPATHY

30.03.10

500

0.3 mill

Muthuramalinga Sethupathy was born on 30 March 1760 at Ramanathapuram to Shri Nerunchithevar and Muthuthiruvirayee Nachiyar.

The Infant prince, the last Marava ruler, was crowned when he was only 72 days old. His mother acted as Regent and ruled over the Kingdom on his behalf. In his twelve year's rule, Ramanathapuram achieved glory. The Kingdom included territories in the north from Kottaipattinam to Vembaru in the south, Kannirajapuram and 120 miles length of sea board in the east.

Scholars of Tamil and Sanskrit were encouraged and rewarded. Considering the importance of the English language, the Schwartz Missionaries were patronized to start a school in Ramanathapuram. Two trusts, namely "Dharma Mahimai" and "Zari Mahimai" were formed to help poor and handicapped persons.

Defying the British rulers, the little kingdom refused to pay the tributes. By aligning with the Nawab of Arcot, the British forces under General Joseph Smith jointly attacked Ramanathapuram Fort unexpectedly on 2nd June 1772. The Fort wall was damaged and Sethupathy with his mother and sister were imprisoned at Trichy Fort. After languishing in the prison for nearly 24 years at Trichy and Chennai, this young warrior died on 23 Jan 1809 at St. George Prison, Chennai.



Theme : Kings & Rulers, Costumes, Leaders.

SPECIAL PROTECTION GROUP

30.03.10

500

0.4 mill

The Special Protection Group (SPG) was created to protect the prime minister after the tragic assassination of Smt. Indira Gandhi in 1984, the then Prime Minister of India. The SPG came into being following a notification dated 30.03.1985.

Initially entrusted with the responsibility of providing proximate security cover to the Prime Minister and family members, its charter was expanded in 1991 to include former Prime Ministers too.



An officer - led organization, the SPG set up for itself a zero defect culture and worked relentlessly towards this ethos. The security drills and procedures, training techniques, weaponry and technical equipment are constantly reviewed for upgradation to ensure that the SPG is equipped with the latest. The aim is to achieve professional excellence in all fields of activity to be able to provide total protection to its Protectees.

It is an organization where teamwork is essential and the closest possible interaction is maintained between all elements in the organization covering scheduled visits and functions and also unscheduled ones, carrying out anti-sabotage checks, risking their personal safety and comfort at every step, the SPG officers work in a climate of high stress.

Since its inception, the SPG has received 26 President's Police Medals for distinguished service and 204 Police Medals for meritorious service.

Theme : Security, Army, Armed forces, Protection Safety,

Prime Ministers.

VALLAL PACHAIYAPPA

31.03.10

500

0.3 mil

Pachaiyappa was born in 1754 in Periapalayam village near Chennai to Shri Visvanatha Mudaliar and Smt Puchi Ammal. When his father passed away his mother, moved with her children to Chennai in search of livelihood. They settled down at George Town, where she obtained the help of Shri Narayana Pillai Dubhashi. He evinced interest on the boy Pachaiyappa and put him into the school. The boy picked up sufficient English to become a Dubhashi. Starting often as interpreters, dubhashis were brokers who handled business and commercial matters between their English Masters and the Indians.



The situation prevalent in the South India was chaotic. The small princely kingdoms were fighting each other. For the British traders the situation was favourable. They employed local people knowing English for the purpose of carrying on with their trade. Shri Narayana Pillai, Pachaiyappa's mentor, was one such person who was a leading Dubhashi of his time.

Pachaiyappa's business acumen was amazing. This earned him the most coveted honour of being the foremost Dubhashi in the Madras Presidency.

His huge successes and wealth in the business did not make him forget his debt to his mentor Narayana Pillai. He secured a job for Pillai's son and made him his agent in Madras.

At the age of 40 he suffered an attack of paralysis. Soon his condition worsened and therefore, he wrote his will, on 22nd March 1794. In the Will sufficient funds had been allocated to perform pujas in selected temples from Kashi to Rameshwaram. He went to Thiruvaiyaru where he passed away on 31 March 1794. Though much was lost due to mismanagement some amount was redeemed and put to good use and one of which is Pachaiyappa's College, Chennai.

Theme : Leader, Educationalist, Philanthropist.

ASTROLOGICAL SIGNS

14.04.10

500 x 12

0.8 mill

The occult has always held a fascination for the human mind. Whether it is deemed an art or a mathematical science, the fascination remains. From the days of Vedic astrology and the Delphic Oracle to current days, we have an inherent curiosity about ourselves, our past and future.

Many countries and schools of thought have their own set of symbols, signs and significant methods of

assessing a person or predicting an event. The twelve zodiac signs are represented by figures and symbols



and associated with constellations and planets and their old Greek, or Roman or Indian legends. The Chinese calendar draws up its projections on the basis of a sixty year cycle, where each year of twelve year cycle is represented by an animal. The Runes and I Ching provide yet another method of prediction, while tarot cards, often used for meditation, have today become an instrument for prediction.



The designs of the stamps are rooted in Indian folk art and depict the 12 zodiac signs against



four base colours which reflect the elements of earth, air, fire and water. The miniature sheet is based on the format of a horoscope, a different version of which is also reflected on the First Day Cover, each of the four reflecting a different element.

Theme : Astrology, Culture, Occult, Zodiac.

CHANDRA SHEKHAR

17.01.10

500

0.4 mill

Chandra Shekhar, was born on 01.07.1927 in village Ibrahimpatti in district Ballia, Uttar Pradesh, in a farmer's family. After his Master's degree in early 1950s, he was closely associated with Acharya Narendra Dev, doyen of the Indian Socialist Movement.

In 1962, Chandra Shekhar was elected to the Rajya Sabha from Uttar Pradesh. He joined the Indian National Congress in 1965 and became the General Secretary of the Congress Parliamentary Party in 1967. He opposed disproportionate growth of monopoly houses with State patronage and wanted rapid social changes. He founded and edited a weekly magazine called "Young Indian" in 1969.

His passion for principles, faith in democratic norms and innate respect for the parliamentary system

made him one of the greatest parliamentarians of his times. In recognition of 'his distinguished service', he was honoured with the outstanding Parliamentarian Award in 1995. He had even undergone imprisonment during the period of Emergency.

Chandra Shekhar always stood against personality based politics and divisive forces. It was he who was chosen to lead the Janata Party following the lifting of Emergency and when the General Elections were held in 1977. He also held the reins of office as Prime Minister for a short period in 1990.



Chandra Shekhar undertook a marathon walk (Padayatra) from Kanya Kumari in the deep South to Rajghat in New Delhi covering a distance of nearly 4,260 Kms from 06 January 1983 to 25 June 1983.

Chandra Shekhar will also be remembered for his contribution to the India's Industrial policy, the high point of which was the nationalization of fourteen banks. Chandra Shekhar remained a member of the Lok Sabha till his death on 08 July 2007.

Theme : Parliamentarian, Socialism, Prime Ministers, Politics.

KANWAR RAM SAHIB

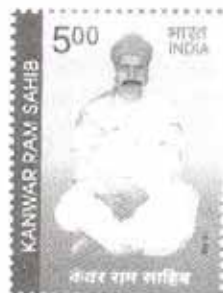
26.04.10

500

0.4 mill

Kanwar Ram Sahib was born in April 1885 in a small village called Jarwar of Sukkur District in Sindh (now in Pakistan). His name Kanwar Ram, in Sindh denotes 'LOTUS'.

Kanwar Ram Sahib went on to become a luminary of Sindh people. He advocated peace, nonviolence and communal harmony. He was endowed with a divine voice which he effectively adopted for "Bhagat", a folk art form of storytelling, with a fusion of song, dance and drama. He radicalized devotional singing and gave anew thrust to Sindh Soofi lyrical folk music.



A pious and humble man, he believed that God existed in the poor and downtrodden. People used to offer a lot of money and jewels while he sang, but he distributed all the offerings he received from the devotees to the poor.

An integral part of Kanwar Ram Sahib's religious life was his love for music and singing. At times, he would spend several days in seclusion and meditate. During that period he would go into a trance, and tears would flow from his eyes.

He was a disciple of Sant Satramedas. He put Sindh on the multi-lingual music scene. People were so

moved by his melodious voice that a famous professional singer from Kolkata came all the way to Sindh to hear his 'Aalap' of Sindh Lothi (Lullaby). What he sang has come down to people of Sindh as a priceless heritage.

He brought Sindh Hindus & Muslims together and opposed the British Rule. He was assassinated on 31st October 1939 inside a train compartment at RUK Railway Station. Many heart-rending elegies were composed as a tribute to this saint martyred for the cause of freedom.

Theme : Leaders, Religion, Music, Martyrs, Freedom Fighter.

IN THE DAYS OF DAWK

Muthiah Ramanathan

Life Member SIPA

"... in response to requests from many well wishers especially from outside Chennai and abroad who receive their postal copies very late..."

These lines in Madras Musings, November 16-30, 2009, left me wondering how the postal system would have worked in the past when rural areas were not as well connected as they are today. Letters were delivered by dak (a Hindi term for 'mail') runners, then riders on horses prior to the advent of other schemes, such as packets sent by steamers, trains and on Dakotas.

I always look forward to the hard copy of Madras Musings in the first and third weeks of every month. If I do not get to read the print version during that week, I start pestering my wife, asking whether she had missed the postman that day or whether the postman did not have anything to deliver.

The following text from the **Penny Magazine of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge** (Charles Knight & Co. London, 1843, Volume 12, p. 157) indicates the glorious past of the postal system in the Presidency of Madras.

"When the Houses of Parliament were investigating the condition and position of India in 1831, preparatory to the renewal of the Company's Charter, many evidence of points were elicited which afford us information respecting the Dawk system".

The text continues: "Among the persons examined before the Commons' Committee was Mr. David Hill, who, in answer to a question whether he thought the Post Office establishment of India was upon as good a footing as it might be made to occupy, stated, **'It is better at Madras than elsewhere;** the mails are conveyed at a **faster rate.** I do not think it is possible to put it on a better footing; there is a want of good roads and a want of horses, they not being used for agricultural purposes in the country. The mails are, however, transmitted with perfect regularity and with very considerable expedition. An express is conveyed at the rate of five miles an hour ... and the ordinary post, when the runners are overloaded with

newspapers and letters, is conveyed at the rate of four miles an hour. I do not think it could be conveyed faster ... The Post Office is not at present used by the natives. If the wealth of the country were increased, they probably would use it. As it is, they send their communications by their friends'."

From **three deliveries in a day to just one per day**, our Postal Department has marked its growth in a unique and distinct way, in this era of developed technologies! But let us look in the text referred to above. In response to a query about the distance traveled by the dak runners in a day and the type of letters and parcels carried by them, it states "... in Madras, from five miles to near ten miles in some cases. Where the distance is longest they do not return... all the men carry newspapers and that with respect to parcels, there is a bungy or box- mail for that purpose, with a different rate of postage in all roads of Bengal and on that principal Madras roads; and the parcels are sent in the way."

Another feature that has long lost its sheen is the seal of various Post Offices that a letter is routed through before being delivered at the destination; almost always they are illegible, sometimes they do not have the complete details. This is the state of affairs in spite of claim of 21st Century technology at the ready disposal of our postal department.

This makes me wonder when or why the practice of affixing the dispatch information on letters was started in India. Again, we note how the events involving Madras in the past had influenced the colonial British to regulate the dak and postal system as it prevailed in the 18th and 19th Centuries. I quote Geoffery Clarke in this extract from the Public Proceeding, July 7, 1766;

"As there have been of late frequent miscarriage of packets to and from Madras without the possibility of tracing the cause, as no advice is ever sent us by the neighbouring Residences... it is agreed to establish the following Rules and communicate them to the Presidency of Madras, recommending the same to be circulated to the factories and Residencies subordinate to them...

"That the day and hour of dispatch as well as the number be noted on the tickets affixed to the packets; that on every packet the number and date of the next preceding dispatch to be noted." (Courtesy: Madras Musings. Feb, 15, 2010)

MALAYSIA'S MOST EXPENSIVE STAMP

King Edward VII biocolored design made its debut in Straits Settlements in May 1910 as a \$500 stamp, making it the highest denomination (in real terms) of any stamp in the world. The \$500 stamps retain their pre- eminence as the world's costliest stamp until 1925 when Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) issued a 1000 rupee stamp in the same keyplate design.



MILITARY CENSORSHIP

What is Censorship?

Censorship in the sense of supervision, control and regulation by the state of the work and, conduct of its citizens has a long and odious history going back to antiquity. The word itself is derived from the ancient Roman office of 'Censor' which was responsible, among other things, for supervising public morals. In modern times it has come to stand for official examination, clearance, suppression, excision or change of books, plays, news, military intelligence and letters. In the Armed Forces Philately we are concerned only with the censorship of private correspondence of soldiers and their correspondents passing through the post which may possibly have some impact on military operations.

The Military Variety.

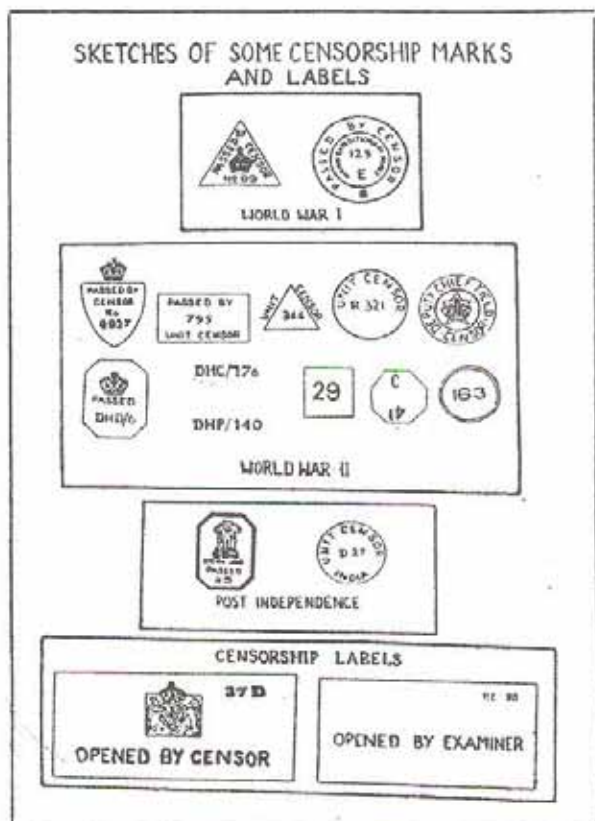
In the Army, censorship is not a dirty word. Censorship of soldiers' mail is not a clandestine, 'do it and deny it' affair that it usually is on the civil side. It is open and authorized and its purpose, guidelines and broad mechanics are published in advance for the information of personnel affected by it. Though irked by its intrusions, the soldiers understand the need for security and accept censorship of their mail as a part of military life and discipline. As a compensation for infringement of their privacy and some delay to their mail, the soldiers are granted various postal concessions and privileges.

Its Organization.

I don't know when exactly a separate censorship organization came into being in the modern Indian Army but it was certainly well-established in the First Great War and has undergone no radical change during the last 60-odd years. To begin with, military censorship is not automatic and perennial. It is imposed and withdrawn by special orders which are published in advance and specify whether it is applicable to outgoing or incoming mail or both. The orders give directions for self-censorship prohibiting the mentioning of locations, organizations, operations, casualties and such matters as may give aid and comfort to the enemy or cause gloom and despondency to the soldiers and their correspondents. Though security is the paramount purpose and justification for military censorship, an important by-product of this surveillance is the weekly report submitted by the Base Censor to the Army Commander giving a picture of the troops reactions to working and living conditions and the state of their morale.

Army censorship operates at three levels-in the unit, in the field and at the base. Each unit in the Army has its own Unit Censor who holds the unit censor stamp. Officers censor their own letters, sign them on the cover in token of having done so and hand them over to the Unit Censor for putting on the unit censor stamp. The lower ranks hand over their letters open to the Unit Censor who reads them, makes whatever excisions he considers necessary, closes them, franks the covers and impresses the unit censor stamp on them. The unit-censored mail is then taken to the Field Post Office (FPO) by the unit post orderly who hands it over the counter to the postal staff. If a Field Censor is stationed locally all mail received at the

FPO is placed before him. He stamps the articles with his distinctive stamp and closes the letters actually read by him with a standard slip bearing the legend 'Opened by Censor'. Mail from stations and areas where there are no Field Censors is sent by the FPOs to the Base Post Office (BPO) where the Base Censor deals with it in the same way as the Field Censor. If he so desires, the Base Censor may open and examine the letters already cleared by the Field Censor. If subject to censorship, incoming mail is dealt with by the Base Censor and is then delivered to the addresses without any reference to the Field and Unit Censors.



How does Philately Come into it?

Postal History is that branch of Philately which deals with the study of postal communications and organisations of all periods and their impact on personal, national and international events with the help, primarily, of used covers but also of relevant postage stamps and their precursors, maps, prints, sketches, decrees and documents. Two of the themes for Postal History collections pertain to Military Mail and Mail Censorship. FPO covers are the basic material for both these themes though Military Mail also includes siege mail as well as prisoners of war and concentration camp mail. The theme of censorship covers both military and civil mail. In making these studies the philatelist is not concerned with the rights and wrongs of mail censorship but how it affects the passage of censorable and censored mail through the post.

How to Begin a Collection?

As already stated the basic material for this theme is the censored cover. Go as far back as you can but certainly up to the First World War. Though the subject is

worldwide, it is better to begin with the home country. Here again it is wise to limit the study to military censorship as the vast majority of identifiable censored items fit in with this theme. So look for the covers that have passed through Indian military censorship. Having got hold of a sufficient quantity of used covers, it would be necessary to decipher and link them with each other to extract a story out of them. For doing this you will need back-ground information about wars and campaigns in which the Indian Army has taken part, the theatres of those wars, periods during which censorship was in force, the methods and organization of the Censors and the stamps and forms used by them. So in addition to the used covers you should collect documents, location and route maps, sketches, prints and photographs which help to explain and elucidate the markings and inscriptions on the covers or otherwise carry forward your theme or story.

How to Exhibit a Censorship Collection?

First, of course, choose a title which is precise and self-explanatory and makes no claim beyond the compass of the material at your disposal. Take for instance the title 'Military Censorship during World War II'. This would cover the censorship of all the military (Army, Navy and Air Force) censorship organizations of the Allied (UK, USA, USSR, India and so on) and the Axis (Germany, Italy, Japan, etc.) forces. Obviously, this is a project beyond the powers and resources of even a seasoned and affluent philatelist. But a title such as 'Some aspects of Indian Army Censorship during World War II' would not be wrong even for a small and incomplete collection.

Next the introduction. A page of background information about the causes, course, and theatres of the war followed by a description of the postal and censorship set-up along with the arrangements for routing, sorting and examination of mails and the times taken in transit. At the end of the introduction you should state what you are planning to show and to what purpose. The following page may illustrate the theme with a map or a sketch as an.

Now the meat of your collection - the covers in order of date and theatres - example of war. As a rule do not put more than one cover on one album sheet. The write-up should describe the significance of the cover, decipher the Censorship (unit, field and base) stamp impression, stating if possible, the military unit of the writer and the theatre of operations. It should also give the locations of the FPOs and BPO, the progress of war operations and the postal links used at that time. If relevant to your story, use sketches of postal and censorship markings on the reverse of the cover which cannot be seen by the viewer. If censorship is known to have been stopped or relaxed at the end of hostilities, end with a cover which brings this out.

A New Field for Indian Philatelists.

Let me warn unsuspecting readers that I have been leading them up a path as yet untrodden in our country. Here the collection of Military Mail is in its infancy and collection of Censored Mail is hardly known. I can, however, assure them that both these lines are fully authorised and approved by the Federation Internationale de Philatelic (F.I.P.). So it behoves the progressive

philatelists of India to make a beginning in this direction. I shall feel amply rewarded if during your visit to an exhibition you tarry before an FPO exhibit and make an effort to distinguish between the censorship marks used at different stages, different times and different theatres of war. (Courtesy : *Souvenir, Delhi Circle Philatelic Exhibition, 1978.*)

BIRDS OF THE WORLD

R. K. BHATNAGAR

In ordinary words birds are two legged, egg laying animals that have wings. Birds had always attracted the imagination of the mankind. In Greek mythology we are told that Daedalus fabricated wings and escaped from Crete with his son Icarus, to avoid imprisonment. Icarus flew so high that the sun's heat melted the wax by which his wings were fastened and fell to his death in the Sea. They are depicted on the Air Mail set of Greece issued in 1935 (SG 480/488).

EVOLUTION OF LIFE:

Of the 4500 million and more years of earth's existence only the last 600 million years can be traced with some accuracy. The earliest vertebrates-primitive fish like animals appeared 500 million years ago and reptiles 350 million years ago. Some reptiles evolved feathers in course of time.

Scientists believe that birds have descended from reptiles and the feathers have developed from their scaly bodies. The earliest bird whose fossil remains were found in upper Bavaria has been named ARCHAEOPTERYX (ancient bird) and is believed to be existing some 130 million years ago. It differed from the modern bird in having teeth in its bill. Modern birds have no teeth but they still have scaly legs like their, reptile ancestors.

It is believed that the bird 'Hoatzin' found in the Amazon forests of South America could possibly provide one of the many missing links in the evolution of birds from reptiles. The newly hatched chicks of the bird have two functional claws on each wing and starts creeping on the tree branches using all four claws in the reptile fashion. The claws disappear in two or three weeks.

Some of the stamps connected with Evolution of life are:

U.S.A.	SG1370
reptiles	
Poland	SG1557
reptiles.	
San Marino	SG775
reptiles	
Poland	SG1644
Guyana	SG 492

BEAKS & FEET

The birds use their beaks to get food, to build nests and to clean their feathers. The feet are meant for specialised uses, such as climbing, scratching, grasping, tearing and swimming. The diverse adoption of the beaks and feet of birds is a remarkable evidence for the influence of the environment in shaping their basic structure.

Birds of prey have heavy hooked beaks for killing and ripping flesh of their prey. pelicans store fish in its enormous pouch hanging from the lower bill. The flamingo filters off plank tonic organism through beaks.



Each bird has feet which are adapted to its way of life. Most birds have four toes. Ostrich is the only bird having two toes. The running birds like Cassowaries, Emus, Rheas have no hind toe and has only 3 toes. Birds of prey have powerful grasping feet with sharp talons for holding and killing their prey. Swimming birds have webbed toes. Pelicans and allies are the only birds having all four toes webbed. The wading birds like storks, cranes, etc. have long legs with flat toes.

REPRODUCTION

All birds reproduce by laying eggs. The birds start by choosing their mates. Male birds often have bright colour which they display to attract mates. The female are usually drab. The males of colourful plumages such as, Birds of Paradise are generally polygamous. But some birds provide excellent examples of partnership. An example is Hornbill, during the incubation period which ranges from 6 weeks to 3 months the female is sealed into its nest. A mixture of mud, saliva and vegetable matters is used for narrowing the hole. Throughout the entire incubation period her faithful mate keeps her well fed. In the Malaysia stamp (SG23), the male hornbill is shown feeding the female through the slit. Another example is that of Emperor Penguins found in South Antarctica. The female penguin immediately after laying the single egg leaves in search of food as she had not taken food for 6 to 8 weeks. The male incubates the egg placing it on his feet for warmth and standing day and night for about 65 days, in temperature which drops to (-)40oF and with wind velocity of 100 M.P.H. During this process his weight reduces from 75 pounds to 50 pounds. The female returns after about 2 months and the male then heads for open water in search of food and the female rears the chicks.

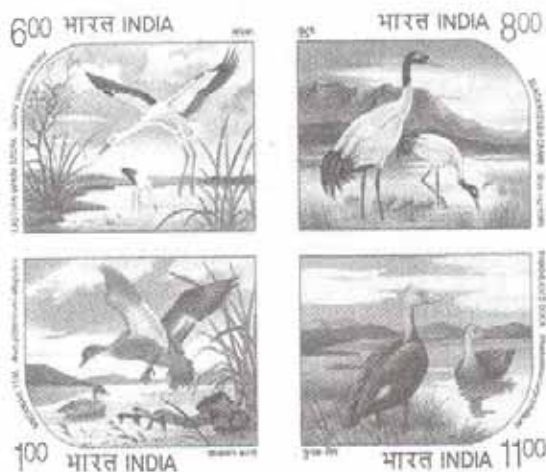
BIRDS FACING EXTINCTION

In the face of human expansion there has been shrinkage of forests, brushlands and other wild covers essential for the survival of birds. During the past 350 years, roughly since the time of Dodos, at least 60 species of birds are known to be extinct. Several rare species are now protected by law and their killing prohibited. A beautiful set of 'Protected Birds' was issued by Congo(SAIRE) in 1963. Other countries have also focussed attention by issuing stamps and showing birds whose existence are precarious viz. Whooping Cranes by U.S.A. and Canada, Notomis by Newzealand (SG754), Audouin's Gull by Cyprus (SG334), etc.

Several birds have become extinct during the last 300 or 400 years. A few such birds, Dodos, Solitaire, Red Rail, Dutch Pigeon and Broad Billed Parrots are shown on Mauritius stamps (SG 327,331).

CLASSIFICATION

The branch of Zoology dealing with birds is called Ornithology. The **ornithologists have arranged birds into 27 orders and 122 families.** The 'Orders' end with the words, "FORMES" and the 'Families' with the words, 'IDAE'.



FLIGHTLESS BIRDS

The flightless birds show more primitive skeleton features than the flying birds. Their scientific name is RATTLE (from latin ratis, a raft). The sternum keel, which provides anchorage to the muscle for moving the wings is absent in these birds. The flightless birds are Ostriches, Emus, Cassowaries, Kiwis, Rheas and Penguins.

STRUTHIONIFORMES

Ostriches: The ostrich is the largest living birds with enormous legs and thigh muscles, standing some 8 Ft high and weighing over 300 pounds. They are found only in Africa and South West Asia. Several countries, such as Algeria, Jordan, Niger, Somalia, Spanish Sahara have brought out stamps showing the ostriches.

CASUARIIFORMES

This order has two birds, Emus and Cassowaries. Both these birds are found in Australia, New Guinea and the nearby Islands. Both are tall birds about 6 Ft high and can also swim well.

Emus Weigh upto 120 pounds and are next to Ostrich in weight and can run upto 30 M.P.H. Emus and Kangaroos are sybolic of Australian life and they appear in a beautiful set issued by Australia showing the Coat of Arms (5 Sh-\$2 issued in1949/50). Cassowaries are distinguished from Emus in having a bright coloured neck with a large casque on the forehead. They appear on stamps of North Borneo (SG 176), Papua and New Guinea (SG 185), etc.

RHEIFORMES

Rheas: This new world bird stands 4 to 5 feet tall and weighs upto 50 pounds. It appears on an Argentina stamp (SG 978)

APTERYGIFORMES

Kiwis: These are the smallest of the flightless birds. These long billed and tailless birds are found only in Newzealand. Kiwis are the only birds whose nostrils open at the tip of the bill. Probably no bird or animal has become more symbolic of its homeland than the Kiwis. It appears on its coins, postage stamps, trademarks for textiles, shoe polish etc. Newzealand overseas troops proudly call themselves KIWIS.

SPHENISCIFORMES

Penguins : These birds are found in South Antartics. They are specialized for aquatic life having webbed feet, and their wings are used as flippers. They look as if a human is standing wearing a frock.

FALCONIFORMES

Birds of Prey : These mighty flying birds are divided under the following categories:

(i) American Vultures and Condors:

The Condors are the largest flying birds having a wing span of 10 feet. These giant birds are shown on the stamps of U.S.A., Ecuador, Cuba, Salvador, etc.

(ii) Eagles :

The 'Symbol of strength' who can even attack a lion (Italian East Africa SG 2). The Golden Eagles of Asia have a wing span of 8 feet and they regularly kill wolves.

(iii) Falcons:

Falcons are trained to hunt wild birds from a man's wrist. This sport is called Falconry (Abu Dhabi 1965 Set). Peregrine Falcon swoops on its prey from a great height at a speed upto 175 M.P.H.

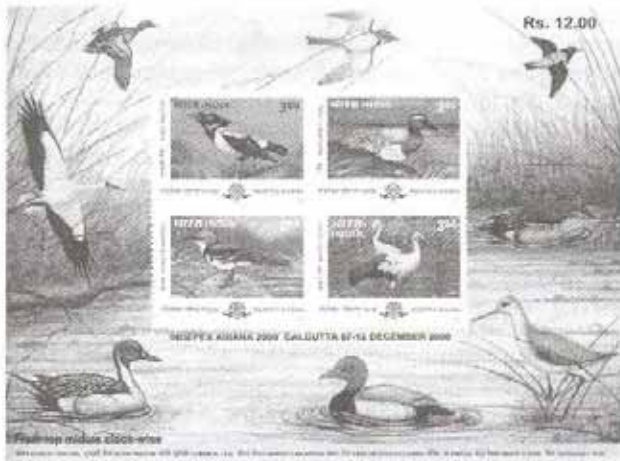
(iv) **Vultures:**

Have a keen eyesight and will appear as if from nowhere as soon as a dead body is dropped and disposes it off in minutes, and serves as a good scavenger.

(v) Other lesser known birds, such as Goshawks, Secretary Birds (who kill snakes), Ospreys, Kestrels, Buzzards, etc.

STRIGIFORMES

Owls: These are nocturnal birds of prey and feed mainly on rats and mice, and so keep their growth in check. Due to their large eyes they have a thoughtful appearance and look wise.



ANSERIFORMES

Water Fowls: Swans, Geese, and Ducks are the true water fowls. Swans are the biggest of waterfowls and have slender necks longer than their bodies. Geese are smaller than swans with long neck but smaller than swans. Ducks are the smallest with short necks. Stamps showing these birds are plentiful.

A New World bird 'Screamer' is also classified under this order. This bird is shown on a Uruguay stamp (SG 1171)

APODIFORMES

Swifts and Humming birds : These birds are unquestioned kings of flight. Swifts can fly upto 200 miles per hour and spend almost all their time on wings.

Hummingbirds are tiny fantastically coloured gem like birds of the New World. They are named after the loud humming noise made by their wings which beat upto 70 time in a second. They can fly forward, backward, sideways or hover motionless like a helicopter. Doctor Bird shown on the Jamaican stamps, is the national bird of Jamaica. Caribs shown on Auguilla and Montserrat stamps are Hummingbirds.

CAPRIMULGIFORMES

Goat suckers and allies: This order of nocturnal birds of large mouths were reputed to milk goats at night. The Oilbirds, Frogmouths, Potoos, Nightjars are included in this order. There are very few stamps showing these birds. Nightjar is shown on a Ghana stamp (SG226).

CHARADIIFORMES

The birds of this diverse and cosmopolitan order are the inhabitants of coastal waters, beaches, marshes, and meadows. These birds fall mainly into three groups:-

(i) **Wading birds:**

Such as Jacanas who can walk on water plants, Stilts having long straight bill, Avocets with long up curved bill lapwings having a tuft on his head and a white apron, Sandpipers having large legs and long bills, Oystercatchers and Plovers.

A beautiful set showing some of these birds was issued by Netherlands in 1961 (SG 907-911).

(ii) **Sea Birds:Gulls, Terns and Skuas:**

Gulls and Terns are large winged white and grey coloured birds. Skuas are found in high altitudes, near cold-seas.

(iii) Auks, Puffins, etc. These fish eating birds are the Northern Counterparts of Penguins. Puffins appear on a French stamp (SG 1504).

CICONIFORMES

Hérons and their allies : All these birds have long necks and long bills. All are wading birds adapted to a life in marshes or shallow waters. A peculiar characteristic of this family is their 'Powder-Downs' feather which is never shed and continues to grow throughout the life of the bird This order includes:

Ibises having a down curved bill, Spoonbills with a bill like spoon, Flamingos whose legs and beaks are larger in proportion of their bodies, the long billed Storks, the Whalehead (Shoe Billed Stork), Herons, Bitterns and the white egret.

COLUMBIFORMES

Pigeons, Sandgrouse, etc.

This order comprises of Sandgrouse, a game bird of desert or Semi desert areas, the dull, lazy and fat 'Dodo' of Mauritius extinct since 1680, Solitaires also of Mauritius and extinct since 1800, and the familiar Pigeons and Doves.

The main characteristic of this order is that they feed their young by regurgitation from a curd like thing formed in their crop. This so called 'Pigeon's milk' has the

same food value as that of a mammal's milk. Pigeons are the only birds who are able to suck up water without raising their head unlike other birds.

COLIIFORMES

olies or Mousebirds: These are small African birds with long tail and crested head which creep on the tree branches like a mouse and damage the crops. This bird is shown on a Ghana stamp (SG 361).

CORACIIFORMES

Kingfishers and allies: This order comprises of: Fishing Kingfisher who eats fish, Forest Kingfisher or Kookaburra of Australia who eats snakes. Hoopoo, the fawn coloured bird with a fan-shaped erectile crest.

It is said that Hoopoes have little need of water, as they seldom drink. The Scimitar Bill shown on the 1967 stamp of Botswana is a Wood-Hoopoo. Wood Hoopoes have no crest on their heads.

Hornbill, having a horny casque over his beak. The acrobatic Roller and indifferent Motmots and Todies.

CUCULIFORMES

Touracos, Cuckoos, Coucals, etc: This order comprises of two families viz, (i) Touracos, and (ii) Cuckoos, Coucals, etc.

Touracos are colourful birds found in Africa. Feathers of Touracos contain copper and if stirred in water, will make it pink. This bird is shown on the stamps of Kenya, Uganda, Ghana, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mali etc.

Cuckoos are best known for their habit of laying their eggs in the nest of other birds. Cuckoos are shown on the stamps of St. Vincent, Cuba, Ethiopia, Dahomey etc.

Coucals have stiff feathers on their heads, necks and breast. Coucals of Malagasy (SG 58) are Coucals.

GALLIFORMES

Fowl-like birds: These are ground birds, good runners and can fly well for short distance only. This order can be divided into the following types of birds.

Game Birds: Grouse, Ptarmigans, Caper-caillie, Quails, Partridges, Turkeys, Guinea-fowls and Domestic fowls (Murgas).

Pheasants and Peacocks: These are the showiest birds in the entire avian kingdom. The males have brilliant coloured feathers and long ornate tails.

Megapodes of Australian region: These are the only birds who do not depend on the heat of their body for incubating the eggs. The eggs are inlaid beneath the soil and hatched.

Currasows, Guans, and Chachalacas: These are

the colourful birds of tropical Americas.

Hoatzins: Its chicks behave in a reptilian manner. GAVIIFORMES *Divers (loons)*

These goose size birds of Northlands, spend almost all their time on or under water. They are excellent swimmers and can stay under water for as long as 5 minutes swimming almost a quarter of a mile in that time. This bird is shown on the stamps of Greenland (SG 65), Iceland (SG 430), Canada (Loon SG 495), etc.

GRUIFORMES

Cranes, Rails and Allies: These are aquatic birds, most being marsh inhabitants. They have weak flight and several species have lost power of flight and facing extinction. Cranes are long legged wading birds. The most ornate are the Crowed Cranes of Africa, shown on the Stamps of Uganda, Zambia, Nigeria, Guinea, etc. Most of the Rails are flightless and facing extinction as they are eaten up for food. The bird 'Notornis' shown on the 1956 stamp of Newzealand, are known to exist only few hundreds, liited to only one or two isolated valleys of Newzealand. Kagus have a prominent crest on their heads, and are found in New Caledonia (a Pacific Island) and shown on its stamps.

BUSTARDS

These birds are good runners but reluctant to fly. Great Bustard (Rumania 1968 stamp) is the heaviest of all flying birds (50 pounds). The bird Gom-Pawk shown on the 1931 stamp of 1/2 d of South West Africa is a Bustard (Gum-Peacock)

PASSERIFORMES

Perching birds: These birds are also called passerines or song birds. This is the largest order of the bird. There are about 5000 birds in this order which accounts for roughly 60% of all the living birds. Nearly all live in trees and they have a backward pointing toe for grasping branches.

PELECANIFORMES

Pelicans and allies: These are large aquatic fish eating birds. This order comprises of:

Sea Birds: Tropic Birds, Cormorants, Frigate Birds, Boobies and Gannets. A beautiful set of a sea birds was issued by Ascension in 1963.

Pelicans: The bird whose bill holds much more than its belly can, and *Anhinga (Darters)* An American bird of long serpent like neck.

PICIFORMES

Wood peckers and allies: This order comprises of: Woodpecker who creeps along tree trunks. Several countries including India have issued stamps showing this bird.

Toucans: A bright coloured fruit eating bird of Americas'. The bill of some species is larger than their

bodies, and

Puffbird (Ecuador SG 1331), Jacamar (Br. Honduras SG 211), Barbets and Honey Guides.

PODICIPEDIFORMES

Grebes: These are diving birds found in all parts of the world near fresh water ponds and lakes. Grebes are shown on the stamps of Falkland Islands (SG 201), Guatemala (SG 845/47), Switzerland (1970: Children fund stamp), etc.

PROCELIARIIFORMES

Tube Nosed Swimmers : These typical birds have their nostrils extended upto the bill in short tubes, and are Albatrosses, Shearwaters, and Petrels. These birds appear on stamps of Ascension (Storm Petrel SG 80), Norfolk Island (Petrel SG 32), etc. The bird Mollymawk shown on 1970 health stamp of Newzealand is an Albatross.

PSITTACIFORMES

Parrots and their allies : These very familiar and colourful birds are recognisable at a glance. This order comprises of the gaint Macaws, Parrots, Parakeets, Cockatoos, Cockateels, Lories, Lorikeets and Lovebirds. The most peculiar habit of these birds is that they hold food in one foot and bits off pieces as a human does.

TINAMIFORMES:

Tinamous is the only bird in this order. This is an American bird and shown on the 1960 Child Welfare Stamp of Argentina (SG 977).

TROGONIFORMES:

This order comprises of Trogons and Quetzals. Trogons have exceptionally thin and tender skin which virtually tears off simply by touching. Quetzal is a brilliant bronze green bird, the males have long feathers. Quetzal is the national bird of Guetamala and shown on several of its stamps. (Courtesy : Souvenir, Tanapex, 1980)

EXPRESS STAMPS

In the past urgent messages were sent by telegram or using the Express mail service. Some countries issued special stamps for such mail or a special label or marking was applied. Today most urgent messages are sent by e-mail, fax or as text-messages although urgent documents and packages continue to be sent through the post using a variety of express special services. Royal Mail offers Special Delivery with a guaranteed next day delivery to most places in the UK by 9.00 a.m. or 1.00 p.m., and for overseas mail there is



or

Airsure. Parcels can be sent within the UK or abroad using a variety of services provided by Parcelforce Worldwide (part of Royal Mail Group plc) or by a considerable number of courier companies. Some of the Parcel force labels used on these premium service parcels have been illustrated in my GB postal Stationery, Postal Labels & postmarks' articles here in GSM.

The definition of Express Stamps in philatelic Terms Illustrated is 'Distinctive postage stamps denoting the fee payable in respect of accelerated mail subject to special handling, either by the delivery office, or all the way'. We are told that express services started in 18th century and in 1839 William F Harnden of Boston (USA) formed an express delivery company. Special stamps were used by many American express companies but the first government issue was produced by the US Post Office in 1885 - a 10c. printed in blue showing a messenger running.



United states Special Delivery stamps of 1922 -25

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