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Jubilee 06

Quarterly

Editorial

DEAR PHILATELISTS,

It is with great pleasure and happiness I am coming to meet you all thro' SIPA Bulletin in a new avatar after a break of nearly five years.

Yea, it is nearly five long years. While some effort was put to bring out an e-bulletin nothing much was able to be achieved in that front. In such a situation, it is nothing but a miracle for the bulletin to take this second avatar.

However, many didn't know about SIPA bulletin's disappearance even. One group's monthly newsletter from North mentions that it receives SIPA bulletin regularly. Ha! Ha!! Ha!!!

As it was found neither convenient nor comfortable to bring out e-bulletin and also as there are quite a few e-bulletins for general and current philatelic news and information, it was decided by SIPA Executive Committee to give 'Second birth' to our acclaimed bulletin and continue it in the same old style and format for the present. We hope all member philatelists will support this endeavor wholeheartedly.

To encourage members to bring out their hidden literary talents, this issue contains three interesting, new and original articles specially written by SIPA members. However SIPA wishes and requests all members to join the bandwagon of writing by bringing out even small notes and articles about their philatelic pursuit with their collections and exhibits sharing their enjoyment with other collectors. They can come out of their shell leaving out their shyness, hesitation, fear of criticism etc. and shine like a shooting star.

At the end of their articles, the authors are introduced to show that the writers are from different professional background which indicates that all or many professional people enjoy the hobby by getting relieved of their workaholic pressures.

All said and done. I request your feedback about this issue, the articles, the subject, details, research and expression which will give a positive push for the betterment of the bulletin in the future.

Happy collecting and exhibiting.

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Editor

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INFO - BITS - 01

JAI HIND - 1947

Immediately after the attainment of independence in 1947, a special postmark was introduced to celebrate the event. This was the "Jai Hind" cancellation, (India) or a slogan (since it conforms to that pattern), but whatever be the classification, its wider use shows it to be an All India type used in all head post offices.

Clearly the dies were made from a master drawing, but there are sufficient differences in interpretation to suggest that they were produced locally by the postmasters concerned. The cancellation was confined to those post offices in which machine cancellation was available. It appeared first on August 15th, 1947 and continued in use in some places until 1948.

Whereas the town names, which naturally vary in length, are contained in circle constant at 24 to 25mm diameter, the tablet with the words "Jai Hind" in English and Hindi varied quite appreciably in general layout and in length.

Examination of the 18 postmarks I collected shows length from 61mms, (Bara Bazar) to 67mm, (Bombay). The width of the middle section containing the words "Jai Hind" varies from 11½ mm. (Barrackpore) to 14½ mm, (Bombay) and others). Naturally this variation affects the size of the words "Jai Hind". Surprisingly, perhaps, the overall height of the strike is constant at about 26 mm.

(Courtesy B.T. Cheverton, India Study Circle)

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GRAND HISTORICAL EVENT

JANUARY 2024

Prime Minister Narendra Modi released six special commemorative postage stamps dedicated to the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Temple in New Delhi on January 18, 2024. Along with this an album of postage stamps (replica) related to Shri Ram which were issued earlier in many countries of the world was also released. The 48-page album contains stamps related to Ram from 20 countries including America and New Zealand. Postage stamps have been made by incorporating five components in its pictures.

The postage stamps related to Shari Ram Janmabhoomi Temple, include **Lord Ganesha, Lord Hanuman, Ram Temple, Jatayu, Kevatraj and Maa Shabari.**

Devotion to Lord Rama has been depicted through artistic expression on these stamps.

On these, a wish has been made for the development of the mention of the popular quatrain.

These stamps have the image of Surya, the symbol of Suryavanshi Ram, which also gives the message of new light in the country.

These postage stamps intricately depict the exquisite interior architecture of the temple with great attention to details.

Prime Minister's speech on release:

Friends,

While we are familiar with the primary function of postal stamps affixing them to envelopes for sending letters messages, or important documents, it is essential to recognize their secondary role also. Postal stamps serve as a medium for transmitting ideas, history, and significant events to the next generation. When a postage stamp is issued and sent to someone, it becomes more than just a means of communication, it becomes a conveyance of historical knowledge. These stamps are not mere pieces of paper or art, they are the smallest forms of history books, artifacts, and records of historical sites. In other words, these are miniature versions of some important texts and ideas. The commemorative postage stamps released today will undoubtedly offer valuable insights and learning opportunities for our younger generation.

As I observed, these stamps feature a majestic picture of the Ram Temple, embodying the spirit of Ram Bhakti through artistic expression and expressing a wish for the nation's well-being through the popular Chaupai-Mangal Bhawan Amangal Hari. They include the image of Surya the symbol of Suryavanshi Ram. conveying the message of new light in the country. Additionally, there is a depiction of the virtuous river symbolizing that the country will always thrive with the blessings of Ram. The intricate beauty of the temple's interior architecture has been meticulously captured on these postage stamps. I have been informed that in a way a miniature representation of our philosophy of five elements is showcased through Lord

Ram. The Postal Department has received guidance from both the sages and the Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust in this endeavour and I extend my salutations to those sages for their valuable contribution. (Information referred by India Post on the souvenir sheet issue.)



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INFO - BITS - 02

THE MANY LIVES OF A FAMOUS STAMP

The Austrian is stamp holds the world record for being printed using four different processes at different times. Designed by H. Strohofeter to mark the 800th anniversary of Mariazell Basilica, it began life on 22 June 1957 [1], engraved by G. Wimmer and recess-printed (intaglio). On 25 October 1957 it was reissued as the first denomination in a new definitive series devoted to buildings. This issue [2] was typographed (letterpress), retaining Wimmer's name in the margin. It is similar to the first: the chief differences are the solid value tablet (the intaglio version has criss-cross lines) and the clouds, which are stippled rather than cross-hatched. The rest of the series, as it gradually appeared, was lithographed, and a version of the is in this process appeared in January 1959, easily distinguished by the omission of the engraver's name and the lighter colour [3]. Finally a smaller format was adopted for the version of February 1960 printed in photogravure by the British printer Harrison and Sons of High Wycombe [4]. Apart from the Allied occupation set of 1945 (printed in Washington), this was the only Austrian stamp printed outside the country.



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TRIMURTI MOTIF POST CARDS OF INDEPENDENT INDIA

Mr. Senthilkumar Chandrasekaran
Life Member, SIPA.

Postcard is called as the common man's tool of communication for a long time. This article brings out a through analysis of the various issues of the Trimurti Motif Post Card, the first set of Post Cards issued by the Postal department of Independent India.

During 1947, Standard coinage system was in vogue wherein Rupee was further divided into Annas, Pice and Pies. It is imperative to understand the currency system and further subdivisions to understand the tariff of the Post Cards then.

16 Annas make 1 Rupee. Likewise 4 pices make 1 Anna and 3 Pies make 1 Pice. One interesting fact to note is that, in the currency system, though 3 Pies make 1 Pice, the lowest denomination of coin was only 1 Pice. However in the Postal system, after Anna the tariffs were based on Pies. For example, 3 Pies is $\frac{1}{4}$ Anna, 6 Pies is $\frac{1}{2}$ Anna and 12 Pies is 1 Anna, there were no postal item based on Pice.



Figure 1. Coins of India

Upon Independence, the tariff of Indian Post Card was 6 Pies and the earlier British India Post Cards with King George VI Motif were continued to be in use. The Tariff for Post Card was revised to 9 Pies from 1st April 1949 and The First Regular Post Card was issued on 7th September 1949 with 9 Pies tariff ($\frac{1}{4}$ Anna, 3 Pices) and with Trimurti motif of Elephanta Caves which was also used for the first definitive series stamp of 9 Pies value.

The design had two numeral panels, one for English and the other for Hindi. Word "INDIA" in English was printed in capital letters between the numeral panels. "TRIMURTI" was printed above the word India. Word "POSTAGE" in English was printed on top left corner. However there are three different variations to the design of the motif being used for Trimurti Motif Post Cards.



Figure 2 : Design Variations of Motif

TYPE 1 DESIGN OF TRIMURTI MOTIF POST CARD

Type 1 Trimurti design of the Regular Post Card was issued as told earlier on 7th September 1949. In the space between the dividing line and the motif, text in English "POST CARD", "ADDRESS ONLY" were printed (marked as 1). The address panel resembled the British India Post Card, with two long dashed lines (-----), one short solid line (____) followed by another long dashed line (2). All the text, motif, dividing line and the address pane line are printed in Green. Type -1 motif was used for this design (3).



Figure 3 : Type 1 Trimurti Motif Post Card

TYPE 2 DESIGN OF TRIMURTI MOTIF POST CARD

Type 2 of the Trimurti Regular Post Card had only a minor variation to the Type 1 design. In this design, the address panel had two long dotted lines (.....). One short solid line (____) followed by another long dotted line (1). Other than this variation in the address panel, the other design aspects of the post card are similar to Type 1. This design came into circulation in 1951.



Figure 4 : Type 2 Trimurti Motif Post Card

TYPE 3 DESIGN OF TRIMURTI MOTIF POST CARD

In Type 3 design, the text in English were replaced to Hindi. Type-2 motif design was used (4). The space between the dividing line and the motif had text in Hindi reading "पोस्ट कार्ड" (pronounced: Post Card) कैवल पत्रा (pronounced: keval pata meaning: Address only) (1).

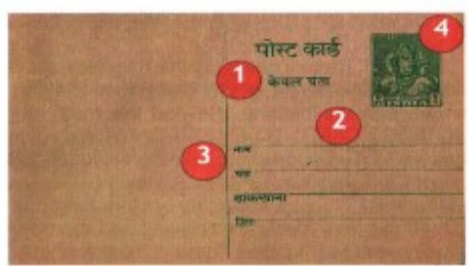


Figure 5 : Type 3 Trimurti Motif Post Card

The address panel had 2 long dotted lines (.....) followed by 1 solid line and 1 long dotted line (2). Each line had a Hindi text describing the purpose of each line. The Hindi text topline is matched with the address panel (3).

Text in address panel are "नाम" (pronounced: Nam meaning : Name) पता (pronounced:pata meaning : address) "डाकखाना" (pronounced: daakkhaana meaning : Post office) "ज़िला" (pronounced: zila meaning : District). This design was used from 12 September 1951.

TYPE 4 DESIGN OF TRIMURTI MOTIF POST CARD

Type 4 of the Trimurti Regular Post Card had only a minor variation to the Type 3 design. In this design, the bottom of the Hindi text in the address panel are aligned to the address panel lines. Other than this variation in the address panel, the other design aspects of the post card are similar to Type 3. This design came into circulation from 2nd October 1951

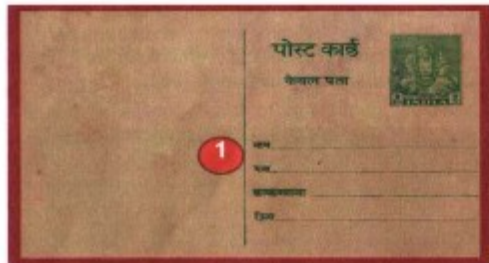


Figure 6 : Type 4 Trimurti Motif Post Card

REPLY POST CARDS (TYPE 5 & TYPE 6)

Reply post cards are one type of post card wherein a part (one Rab) annexed to the main post card is meant for reply from the receiver to the sender. The receiver can detach this part and send their reply.

Type 1 of Trimurti Regular Post Card with English Text are also issued in Reply Card Format. These cards came into circulation from 7th September 1949 (Type 5). Similarly, Type 2 of Trimurti Regular Post Card design was issued in Reply Card Format (Type 6). These cards came into circulation from 1951.

Trimurti Motif Main and Reply post cards can be differentiated easily from the Regular Post Cards. Main Post card sent by sender can be identified by presence of text "THE ANNEXED CARD IS INTENDED FOR REPLY". Similarly reply Post card had the text "REPLY".

Figure 7 : Main and Reply Post Card differentiation



text(Type 5 & Type 6)

TYPE 7 DESIGN OF TRIMURTI MOTIF POST CARD

Type 3 of the Trimurti Regular Post Card with minor new design variation are issued in Reply Card Format (Type 7). These cards are based on Hindi Text design and came into circulation form. The minor variation was in the address panel, where there is an additional dotted line (....) introduced after the second line (2). This line had no text identifier and was meant for 2nd subline of the address description.



Figure 8 : Type - 7 Reply Post Card with Hindi Text

To identify the main part of the Post card, a new line "साथ का कार्ड जवाब के लिए" (pronounced: saath ka card jawab ke liye meaning: the annexed card is meant for reply) (1) was introduced between two lines. Similarly to identify the reply part of the Post card, "जवाबी" a new line (pronounced: jawabi, meaning: reply) was introduced.

GANDHIJI COMMEMORATIVE POST CARD (TYPE 8)

Apart from regular postal cards, India post issued commemorative cards on special events or occasions. FIRST SET OF COMMEMORATIVE POST CARD was issued on remembrance of Mahatma Gandhiji on 2nd October 1951. These post cards had Trimurti motif and had Type-4 design of Hindi Text. A set of 4 post cards were issued with following images (TYPE-8)

- Image of Gandhiji on the message side of the post card
- Image of Gandhiji with Chakra on the message side of post card
- Image of Gandhiji holding Child on the other half of address panel.
- Image of Gandhiji and Kasturba on the other half of address panel

Mr. Abhijit De,
Philatelist, Chennai.
Life Member, S.I.P.A



Figure 9 Type 8 Commemorative Post Cards on Gandhi

**TYPE 9 INDIAN POSTAGE STAMP CENTENARY
COMMEMORATIVE POST CARD**

Second commemorative post card with Trimurti motif was issued for INDIAN POSTAGE STAMP CENTENARY in 1954.

This postcard has Type -3 Trimurti motif in red color (1). All the text were in Hindi and in red color. Address panel had no lines and completely blank (2). Text in Hindi on Left side of Address Panel "भारत डाक टिकट शताब्दी" (pronounced: Bharat Dak Ticket Shatabdhi meaning: Indian Postal Stamp Centenary) and numerals "1854 - 1954" in English script were printed in red color (3)



Figure 10 Type 9 Commemorative Post Card

The legacy of Trimurti post card continued till 31st March 1957, when decimal coinage system was introduced in India from 1st April 1957 and the successive post cards featured a new motif of Asoka Emblem.

Author:

A chemical engineer from AC Tech, Anna University, Chennai is General Manager & Head Engg. at VA Tech WABAGH Limited, Chennai.

Senthilkumar collects 'all' philatelic materials of Post Independent India, along with thematic Gandhi, Olympics and Joint Issues.

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Introduction

There are 193 sovereign nations in our World today, one of which is our very own country, the Republic of India. Therefore one of the issues that concerns each country is the state of their economy compared to the rest of the World, and their Brand, which is often represented by the currency of a nation, since a currency note or coin is common currency for each citizen, and the first thing an average tourist comes across when they visit a nation. India's Reserve Bank of India has a role in both these areas, and therefore when the Platinum Jubilee of The Reserve Bank of India was celebrated, many different philatelic activities that could be carried out to represent the activities of RBI were initiated. Some of these Philately related items are described in this article. Therefore, just like stamps of a country, which are a relatively recent development, the currency of a country has for long represented the country to both natives and foreigners. Coin hoards found in various archaeological sites, have helped also trace ancient commercial and trading patterns in between countries. Therefore, on closer analysis, these philatelic related items connected to the Platinum Jubilee celebrations of the Reserve Bank of India, extend to areas well beyond the issue of a commemorative stamp.

As one may be aware, before 1918 AD, Nations, Kingdoms and Principalities have been controlling the minting and circulation of coins, which was the major form of currency then, directly through the sovereign ruler of the country. As seen on the coins of ancient Greece, of the Vijayanagar Empire or the Chola Empire, shared here, not only the sovereign ruler, but other symbols that represent that historical period of a nation, are shown on the coins issued by a nation, and comparatively more recently on currency notes, as can be seen in the items shared here, issued for the R.B.I. Platinum Jubilee.

Illustrations shown for information are not to scale



Caption : These stamps, a representative selection from sets issued in the late 1950s by Greece, show stamps issued by classical Greece in between 5 and 3 B.C. These symbolisms, continue to represent their country in the modern era. For example the Drachma 3.50 orange stamp of Greece, represents their Goddess Athena and her owl. In Indian Mythology, in contrast, the Owl is the mount of Goddess Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth. In the case of India, the coins and other symbolisms of the Chola and Vijayanagar Empire Eras in India, shown here, represent periods when foreign trade, currency and narrations by foreign visitors had shown the historical richness of resources and wealth of our country -Periods of our history we can be proud of.

The creator of the Stamp for R.B.I is the well known stamp designer, Shri Shanka Samanta, who featured many historical currency and coins of India in the designs he made for this stamp and related Information Brochure. Therefore this article also incorporates items of interest to Numismatists, apart from Philatelists. After all many stamp collectors also collect coins and currency, as all 3 have a common area of interest- the unique design of each collector item.



as a share holder's bank, with all shares owned by private parties. It had its central office in Kolkata (then Calcutta), before the Central Office was moved to the Fort area of Mumbai. After creation in 1935, the R.B.I. took over the operation of Government functions hitherto performed by the Controller of Currency for issue of currency notes and coins, and the Government Accounts and Public Debts functions performed by the Imperial Bank of India. The currency offices of the Controller of Currency located in Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai, Rangoon, Karachi, Lahore and Kanpur become branches of the currency issue of the R.B.I. Before that, as per the Paper Currency Act of 1861, Private Banks were divested of their Rights to issue paper currency, which they used to do earlier. Before the R.B.I was set up, Indian currency was issued by the Government of India. After 1935 the currency notes were issued by RBI and signed by its Governor, except for the one Rupee note, which had been introduced as a temporary replacement for the 1 Rupee Coin during WW I to save metal, and was again reintroduced during WW II. Therefore the Re. 1 note continued to be signed For The Government of India, by The Finance Secretary, for equivalent post created by Government, just as the pre-RBI formation currency notes had been issued by The Government of India and also signed "For the Government of India". Therefore the 1 rupee note is technically called a Bank note, and the other notes Currency notes.

The current position is that the Government of India decides about the quantity of coins to be minted, based on the Coinage Act 1906 and amendments thereof, where as the RBI decides on the volume and value of the currency notes to be printed. Rupee one notes, if and when issued, continues to be signed by the Secretary, Finance, Government of India.

The concept of a Central Bank, independent of the Government as per its Charter, and without the conflicting interests that limit the scope of Commercial Banks, saw progress in the early 20th century when the USA's Federal Reserve System was established in 1913, and South African Reserve Bank in 1921 (South Africa then was a colony jointly ruled by The Netherlands and Britain, and therefore this acted as a model for the R.B.I.)

(To be continued)

(First part of four part serial)

Role of R.B.I.

One of the main roles of the Reserve Bank of India is to issue currency, and ensure that adequate measures have been taken to prevent forgery, to ensure credit control, and thirdly to advice Government on measure to control foreign exchange rates, inflation or deflation, and policies to control the functioning of all other Banks and financial institutions in our nation. Therefore from 1st January 1949, after the nations of Pakistan and Burma had been created and separated from our nation, the R.B.I in India was fully nationalised and taken over by Government of India, with full control after purchase of all shares that had been issued.

However this wasn't the situation when the Reserve Bank of India was established on 1st April 1935

Author

A full time devoted philatelist after retiring in 2011 from private companies including Bharat Petroleum. He is an accomplished and well known philatelic writer with depth and research on the topics of his choice. His participation in SIPA whatsapp group is quite informative and admirable with the 'variety' of his illustrations shows the formidability of his collection of around six decades.

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GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION-TAGGED HANDLOOM PRODUCTS OF TAMIL NADU

Mr. S. Balasundaram,
Life Member SIPA.

Handlooms have been a fundamental part of the human life since the dawn of the civilization. From the sculptured figures and engraved seals excavated from the Indus Valley civilisation, the dress of men and women consisted of two pieces of cloth-one resembling a dhoti, covering the lower part, and the other worn over the left shoulder and under the right arm. The discovery of a large number of many figurines and engraved seals, numerous spindle whorls of wool and coarse cotton, some copper sewing needles show that there existed woven and dyed cotton fabrics and they knew spinning, weaving, dyeing and the art of stitching.

As far traditional weaves of Tamil Nadu is concerned there are references in Tamil Sangam literature to show that silk, cotton and woollen clothes were woven in Tamil Nadu. Textiles were broadly classified as aruvai (cotton), thugil (fine material) and kalingam (extremely fine material), though there are more than 30 names for textiles in Tamil. Tamil literary evidences suggest that fabrics as thin as steam, and fine clothes resembling the skin of snakes were woven and used in Tamil Nadu and were exported to foreign countries as well. Silappathikaram, dates back to 400 CE speaks of superfine silk clothes sold in the streets.



Artefacts unearthed in
Mohenjo-daro

“நூலினு மயிரினு நுழைநூற் பட்டினும்
பால்வகை தெரியாய் பன்னூறடுக்கத்து
நறுமடி செறிந்த வறுவை வீதியும்”.

சிலப்பதிகாரம் (14: 205-207)

English translation

There is a buzzing market street (in the city) where rich variety of fabrics woven in cotton, silk and animal fur were available in abundance.

-Silappathikaram, Tamil Epic.

Uraiyur cotton and silk sarees are aged back to 300 BC during the earlier Chola Dynasty when they flourished in all grandeur. It is also said that sarees woven in Uraiyur were thin enough to fit inside a coconut shell. Legend has it that highly skilled weavers like Padmasalis, who are considered as the descendants of sage Markandeya were able to weave clothes with thread drawn from the stem of the lotus plant. Murals/fresco paintings discovered in 1931 in the Big Temple of Thanjavur show

that King Rajaraja Chola (985-1014 CE) worshipping Nataraja wearing silk cloth.

The districts of Tiruchirappalli and Thanjavur sent muslins to Egypt and Rome and called them as *Argaritic* according to the Periplus of the Erythraen Sea. *Argaru* was the Roman name for Uraiyur the capital of the early Cholas. There are several references of export of handloom textiles by the Portuguese, Dutch, and East India Company during the 16th and 17th Century from Madraspatam, Pondicherry, Cuddalore, Karikal, Nagapattinam, and Tuticorin.

Silk in handloom

The production of silk originated in China in the Neolithic (Yangshao culture, 4th millennium BC) age. Silk remained confined to China until the Silk Road opened during the later half of the first millennium BC, which brought silk to India, Europe and Africa. The silk route saw the trade of Indian silk, cotton and muslin in exchange for spices and several explorers and historians including Megasthenes, Herodotus and Marco Polo have praised these textiles in their works.

Silk fabric, also known as *Paat* in East India, *Pattu* in South India and *Resham* in North India, is a natural fiber produced from the cocoons of mulberry silkworm through a process called Sericulture. The yarns produced from the process of sericulture are used to weave a variety of textiles. About 97% of raw silk is produced in the five Indian states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Jammu and Kashmir. In Tamil Nadu mulberry cultivation is concentrated in Coimbatore, Erode and Dharmapuri districts. Gobichettipalayam in addition to Hyderabad has become the first locations to have automated silk reeling units.

Grandeur of textiles

The process of hand-weaving is simultaneously meditative and laborious. It is an art as well as a science. There are millions of design possibilities depending on the systems, methodology and order of weaving. When one watch closely there is a rhythm, color interaction and texture of various yarns and materials, that makes this a creative art of highest order. In all the nooks and corners, rich with regional tradition and variations in patterns, designs, color schemes to suit the different occasions, may be a grand wedding, party wear or of daily use. India offers a rich variety of textiles, woven on handloom.



Left part of Special Cover on Traditional
Textiles of Tamil Nadu

Swadeshi movement and revival of traditional textiles

7th August, 1905 is an important date in the history of Indian freedom struggle. On this day one of the defining movements in our struggle called Swadeshi Movement, was launched. The movement encouraged indigenous industries, which included handloom weaving. Realising the importance, the Government of India in 2015, decided to designate the 7th August every year, as the National Handloom Day (NHD). India Post, on its part to celebrate the memorable event released a set of Postage Stamps on Geographical Indication (GI) registered Handloom Products of India on 7th August 2018.

Stamps of India Post on handlooms/textiles

Much before the issue of G I stamps, to commemorate the rich tradition in textile production, a set of four stamps depicting the images of Kalamkari, Apa Tani, Banaras and Kanchipuram silk sarees was issued on 10.12.2009. In 2019 a set of 12 beautiful stamps on Embroideries of India were released and few among them like, Phulkari, Toda, Chikankari, Applique and Sujni were already granted G I tag. Besides, there were stamps on Indian Fashion-through the ages (2018) and Bridal Costumes of various regions of India (2023) issued. Some of these stamps are shown here.



A set of four stamps on Traditional Indian Textiles were issued on 10.12.2009. Of the four, one depicts Kanchipuram Silk.



Miniature sheet having five stamps on G I tagged handloom products issued on 7th day 2018



Bridal costume of Tamil Nadu among the two sets of eight stamps issued in 2023

Handloom in Tamil Nadu

Weaving is a cottage industry in Tamil Nadu and all the family members are involved in the weaving. There are several weaving communities like, Devangar, Sengunthar, Saliyar, Pattusaliyar, Padmasaliyar and Saurashtrian (Pattunoorakarar), some of whom have migrated from Gujarat, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Their weaving skills were passed on from one generation to the next.

There are 40 handloom clusters identified by the Department of Handlooms & Textiles, Government of Tamil Nadu, where the weaving is concentrated and carried out by the communities for several generations. The handloom products developed by them are known by the respective area, like Uraiyur, Koranad, Kanchipuram, Thirupuvanam, Ami, Aruppukkottai, Madurai, Karaikudi, Negamam, etc. In order to protect the location-based originality of these products, the Controller General of Patents, Government of India has so far conferred the Geographical Indication tag for 12 handloom products of Tamil Nadu.

What is Geographical Indication (GI) ?

A Geographical Indication or GI tag is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin. Such a tag conveys an assurance of quality and distinctiveness which is essentially attributable to the geographical origin of the product. The owner(s) of the GI tag has exclusive rights over the product and can sue others for trying to duplicate the product, if necessary. GIs are protected by intellectual property rights (IPR) according to the World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and the Geneva Act.

What is the origin of GI ?

It all started in 1997 when an American company RiceTec based in Texas applied for a patent of its unique rice varieties, "Texmati" the American-style Basmati rice and "Kasmati" the Indian-style Basmati rice. Soon controversy erupted with Indian NGOs filing serious objections to a private company trying to appropriate the indigenous knowledge of traditional Indian farmers, which is considered as "Biopiracy". The company was forced to withdraw after the Indian government raised objections invoking the "TRIPS" agreement. That was the first time the World got to know about Geographical Indications.

Legal Protection in India

In December 1999, the Parliament of India had passed the Geographical Indication of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, which seeks to provide for the registration and better protection of geographical indications relating to goods in India. The Act would be administered by the Geographical Indications Registry headed by a Registrar and located at Chennai. GI tag confers legal protection to the products, prevents unauthorised use of a



**EXPLORING THE JOYS OF
POSTCROSSING**

- Dr.T.Jaisakthivel
Life Member SIPA

For those longing for a touch of the exotic, a glimpse into a distant culture, or simply a dose of handwritten warmth in the digital age, there exists a portal to a world of wonder: Postcrossing. This unique platform is not just about exchanging postcards; about connecting with strangers across continents, fostering understanding, and embarking on a delightful journey of discovery, all through the magic of snail mail.

The Intriguing Premise:

Imagine receiving a postcard from a bustling Tokyo street market, its vibrant colors and bustling energy captured on a small piece of card. Or picture yourself holding a postcard adorned with the majestic peaks of the Himalayas, penned by someone who has scaled those very heights. Postcrossing makes these experiences a reality. By signing up for a free account, you become part of a global community of enthusiasts, each eager to share a piece of their world.

How It Works:

The process is delightfully simple. You request a postcard, and Postcrossing randomly selects another member from its vast network. Their address and some profile information are shared with you, along with a unique Postcard ID. This ID becomes the passport of your message, ensuring it reaches its destination. Write a heartfelt message, include the ID, and send it off, anticipation filling you as you imagine its journey. Once the recipient registers the card, you become eligible to receive one back, embarking on your own adventure of discovery.

More Than Just a Hobby:

While the thrill of receiving postcards is undeniable, Postcrossing offers more than just a collection of colorful souvenirs. It is a cultural exchange program in miniature, fostering understanding and appreciation for different ways of life. Reading about another member's hobbies, favorite foods, or dreams allows you to peek into their world and connect on a human level. It encourages curiosity, sparks conversations, and reminds us of the shared humanity that binds us all.

Safety and Security:

Privacy is paramount, and Postcrossing takes it seriously. Addresses are used solely for postcard exchange and are never shared publicly. Moreover, the random selection process ensures your information remains safe. For those seeking extra privacy, using a PO box or omitting your return address are viable options.

registered item by others, promotes economic prosperity of producers of goods produced in a geographical territory and boosts export.

So far (as on 1.2.2024) G I tags were given to 547 products under various categories by the Registry, of which 30 relates to the Logo of the G I Products. Of the 547 products, Handloom items account for 130, which works out to 24 per cent. Among the 130 products, Tamil Nadu's share is 12, starting with Salem Fabrics in 2005 and ending with Negamam Cotton saree in 2023. Brief details of each of the eleven GI tagged handloom products of Tamil Nadu are given below.

1. Salem Fabric (G I tag given in 2005-06)
2. Salem Silk known as Salem Venpattu (2007-08)

Salem, which got G I tag for two of its handloom products, is one of the primary handloom centers of Tamil Nadu. Saree, dhoti and angavasthrum are made out of silk yarn and cotton yarn. Salem Fabric is the first product which got GI tag in TamilNadu and the fourth in India. Salem fabric, a yarn dyed cotton fabric, contains a unique weaving pattern that was developed in the year 1942. The striking feature of this fabric is that it does not require the pre-weaving process of sizing, because it is made of double-yarns. The silk sarees of Salem are renowned for their intricate workmanship and the use of zari, which adds value to the product. Elampillai in Salem district is one of the largest manufacturers of silk sarees in Tamil Nadu. With the changing times, many artisans have started making cotton sarees as well.

Salem Silk or Venpattu is produced from time immemorial by the local traditional weaving community known as "Sourashtrians". The Silk of Salem are famous for their luster, whiteness, technical excellence and novelty of border designs viz., Nagachattai, Kammal, Diamond with roja, muthu with gold pettu etc. Raw silk is degummed & bleached (locally known as *Ushna*) and used in warp & weft. Pure jari or half fine (imitation Jari) is used in border and *Pullu / Kambi*, which is unique to this variety. It is woven on pit loom / raised loom. Of late jacquard is used in case of bigger designs or *korvai* designs.



**Special Cover on Salem Venpattu released on
19.8.2021 by India Post**

Author: (To be continued)

Mr. S. Balasundaram (IPoS) retired Asst. Post Master General is a rare breed of Postal official-cum-philatelist. After retirement he has acted as officer on special duty for INPEX - 2008, National exhibition held at Chennai. He has also performed as Departmental juror in many philatelic exhibitions.

☆☆☆☆☆

Is it for Everyone?

Whether you are a seasoned collector, a budding philatelist, or simply someone looking for a unique and enriching hobby, Postcrossing welcomes you with open arms. It caters to diverse interests, from history buffs and art enthusiasts to animal lovers and foodies. You can choose to receive postcards based on your preferences, or embrace the element of surprise and let the world come to you.

But Remember:

Postcrossing is not about completing collections; it is about embracing the unexpected and appreciating the personal touch of a handwritten message. Embrace the diversity of postcards you receive, be it a quirky caricature or a majestic landscape. The true value lies in the connection it fosters, the story it tells, and the window it opens into another life.

Join the Adventure:

So, are you ready to embark on a journey around the world, one postcard at a time? Sign up for www.postcrossing.com today and discover the joy of connecting with strangers, learning about different cultures, and experiencing the magic of snail mail in a whole new way. Remember, it is not just about the postcards; but about the stories they hold, the connections they forge, and the world of wonder they unlock.



PPC with 4 Stamps of China

Author:

Dr. T. Jaisakthivel, Assistant Professor in the Department of Journalism and Communication at the University of Madras, has an impressive career in the realm of communication. He is the author of 12 books delving into the fascinating world of International radio and Ham radio. Dr. Jaisakthivel is a collector of radio-related stamps and has exhibited up to National level with awards. Currently, Dr. Jaisakthivel is embarking on a book about the Postcrossing.

☆☆☆☆☆

INFO - BITS 03

DESIGN ERROR IN U.N INDIAN FLAG STAMP

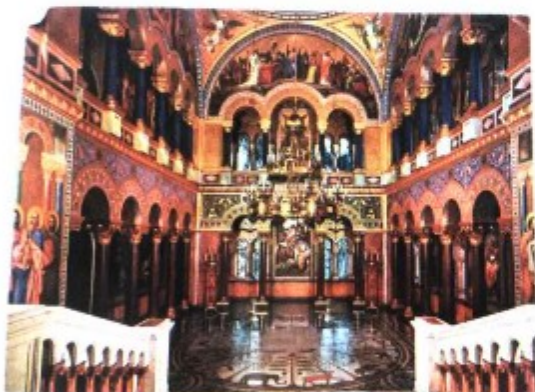
On 20th September 1985, UN Postal Administration had issued a stamp depicting the Indian National Flag. Mr. Nikilesh Melkote of Bangalore, who is a collector of Flags on Stamps, studied the stamp as soon as he received it. He noticed that the Ashok Chakra shown on the flag had only 12 spokes instead of the 24 which exist in the Indian National Flag. He took up the matter immediately with the UN postal administration with a view to getting the stamp withdrawn and re-issued with a correct design of the chakra. He received the following reply from the UN Postal Administration.

27th January 1986

Dear Mr. Melkote

Thank you for your recent letter concerning the 1985 Flag Series stamps. You are quite correct in observing that the wheel in the U.N. Stamp depicting the India flag has 12 spokes instead of the 24 that exist in the National flag of India.

☆☆☆☆☆



PPC (40 years old) from Germany)

DEPARTED SOULS OF SIPA 2021 - 2023

Mr. G. Balakrishna Das, the last surviving founder-

member of South India Philatelists' Association passed away on 4th August 2020 after serving philately for more than 72 years. At the age of 73, he alongwith five like minded stamp collectors formed the South India Philatelists' Association in 1956. The Association has grown like a banyan tree.



Mr. G. Balakrishna Das, was a much beloved and most wonderful person. He was soft spoken and very genial and treated the new collectors with respect so that they will feel at ease. No words can describe his penchant for the hobby of stamp collecting. He was Secretary of the Association for a very long time and became the President in the year 1998. His continuous visits to the Post Office to build up rapport with the Officials has resulted in the recognition of South India Philatelists' Association in all their efforts to create and promote philately. His advices and inputs in all matters of philately was greatly appreciated by the Dept of Post.

His house used to look like a post office as it is full of stamps and postal cancellations from 1837 to the stamps issued till he passed away. To create awareness in kids and motivate them to take stamp collection as a hobby, Mr. Balakrishna Das had conducted several seminars and workshops in schools attracting children to philately. Every weekend, Mr. Balakrishna Das met with fellow enthusiasts to figure out ways to get children interested in the world of stamps. He lamented lack of parental support, encouragement and proper guidance to children have turned out to be biggest challenges to attract kids to philately.

One of the redeeming feature of the Tanapex 2017 was the recognition and felicitation of Mr. G. Balakrishna Das, who was then the President of South India Philatelists' Association by the Chief Postmaster General, Dr. Charles Lobo for his contribution in nurturing the Association from its inception. It was crowning glory for him as well as the Association he had founded way back in 1956.

He has participated in State, National and International (Ausipex - 84, Philakorea - 84) Philatelic Exhibitions and won higher awards for his collections "French India" and "Indian Convention States". He was an authority on both the subjects.

South India Philatelists' Association misses him very dearly.

May these souls

RIP

☆☆☆☆☆



Mr. Dhananjay Deasi
Ahamedabad
Jan 2021



Mr. Bhagchand Luhadia
Jaipur
30.03.2021



Shri Arvind Rai C Shah
New Delhi
22-05-2021



Mr. J Krishna Moorthy
Villupuram
03-05-2021



Shri. N.Raghupathy
Nagappattinam
26.02.2022



Mr. Mario Eric Ramanujam
Puduchery
19.03.2022



Smt. SATHI VERACHANDRA MENON
Tiruvananthapuram
01.05.2022



Shri. D. HEMACHANDRA RAO
Chennai
01.06.2022



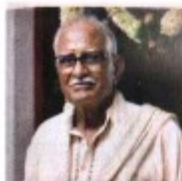
Shri PRAKESH AGARWAL
Hyderabad
18-04-2023



Shri Ajay Kumar Mittal
New Dehli
05-06-2023



Shri. D.Venugopal
Chennai
24.07.2023



Shri. U.MOHAN RAO
Chennai
10.08.2023



Shri. T.T.KESAVAN
Chennai
30.11.2023

DISTRICT POSTS OF MADRAS PRESIDENCY

by Late Col. L. G. Shenoi

The Postal system of what was then British India has earned a glamorous position in the history of communications. A parallel system which existed side by side with the postal system during the nineteenth century, however, has drawn comparatively little attention from the students of the history of posts. This was the District Dawk system variously called District Post, District Tapal, Taluk Tapal etc.

The 'Story of the Indian Post Office' has this to say about this system :-

"As the General Post in its early stages, did not cover the entire area occupied by the Hon'ble East India Company's Government, another organisation, the district Post was developed, connecting the headquarters of each district with Internal police and revenue stations, in accordance with the local requirements of the District.

"This localised postal system established for official purposes and known as the 'District Post' was manned by the District Officers or other local subordinates. And the expenditure on the service was met by a cess levied on the Zamindars in Bengal and the North Western Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh), or on the local people in other areas, supplemented by Central grants-in-aid. The cess on Zamindars was the offshoot of an earlier arrangement by which landholders were responsible for undertaking the conveyance of official correspondence. This was later commuted into money payments by Act VIII of 1862. When the money received on Zamindars cess amount fell short of the actual requirements for the maintenance of the District Posts, the deficit was met by grants-in-aid from the Imperial Government. Nearly in all cases the revenue from cess had to be supplemented by these Imperial grants-in-aid. In the absence of a central authority to co-ordinate the activities and lay down uniformity of procedure, the services were extremely unsatisfactory and varied from areas to areas and there was no cohesiveness in the postal system as a whole.

"The delivery of the letters received by the District Posts as effected through the police and the village chowkidars who had no inclination to take pains in discharging their responsibilities and delivered the mail 'in quite a leisurely manner. Although the primary object of the district Post was to deliver district and other official correspondence and parcels, it also undertook on behalf of the Imperial Post Office to provide for the collection and distribution of private correspondence not only in the town areas but also in villages which they served at intervals. As could be expected under such arrangement a sixth of the covers sent to the police and other subordinates for delivery in the interior villages were returned by them as undelivered".

The Post Office Act of 1854 stipulated that 'It shall be lawful for the Governor-General of India in Council to frame Rules for the management of all or any zamindaree.

Thannah or other District dawks and to declare from time to time, what portions of this Act shall be applicable to such dawks and to persons employed in connection therewith, General Rules relating to the receipt despatch and delivery of letters by District posts were approved on 12th August, 1854. The following are some extracts from these rules:-

1. "Whenever any local establishment may be maintained for the conveyance or delivery of the police, revenue or other official communication, it shall also be made use for the conveyance and delivery of private correspondence, and be designated a District Post.
3. "Such Police stations and other public Offices as may be selected by the local Governments shall be constituted District Post Offices.
6. "Any person wishing to post a registered letter at any District Post Office can do so. One anna of the registration fee will be allowed to the person registering the letter the remaining three annas must be sent with the letter by the same day's despatch to the nearest Post Office.
9. "Fifteen minutes before the hour at which the dispatches of the Office are usually made up the Letter Box will be opened and the letters in it taken out. Those addressed to places to which there is a direct communication through the District post will be separated from all other letters sorted and packed in covers addressed to the Officers charge of the District Post Office from which they will be delivered. The remaining letters will be made up into one packet and addressed to the nearest Post Office with which he has communication.

The District Posts in the 1960's were placed under the Supervision and control of the Indian Post Office. The 'Story of the Indian Post Offices' states.

"The District Post in Madras was the third system to pass under the Jurisdiction of the Imperial Post Office. In this service prior to 1867, the arrangements for village delivery of correspondence delivered by subordinate village officials, who not only took no interest in the delivery of non-official correspondence, but even went to the extent of extorting illegal fees for delivering private letters. There were no letter boxes and no orderliness in the system, either in the matter of delivery or collection. The money grants were rarely spent in their entirety. In 1867 one district was transferred to the Imperial post as an experimental measure, but by 1873 eleven more districts passed into the hands of the Imperial Post.

The District Posts system throughout the country was abolished by 1st April 1906.

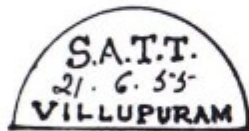
The District Posts were primarily meant for carrying official dak. The members of the public were not allowed to make use of it for a long time, and even after being thrown open for private correspondence they were utilised by the public very sparingly. As a result, the mails bearing the imprint of the District Post Offices which have survived are pretty scarce. An attempt is made here to illustrate some of the hand stamps used by the District Post Offices of Madras presidency during the period 1855-1873.



The District Post Offices of Madras Presidency used the designation T.T. (Taluk Tapal), D.T. (District Tapal) or District Post Office. Renouf in his masterly work on early Indian Cancellations has stated that the earliest type of a District post cancellation in Madras Presidency was the Circle of Bars. He designated this as Type 2b cancellation. Jal Cooper designated it as type 2c. According to Renouf: "there are many recorded covers from places in the Tanjore District, including Puddoocottah, Mannarcoody, Anthangy and Trivadi". These show a large elliptical stamp Talook Tapal (District Post) along the lower curve and the name of the post office along the major axis. An alternative cancellation is a large semi-circle containing the same details.

Jal Cooper has illustrated the semi-circular despatch hand stamp of TANJORE / T.T. / PUTTOOCOTTAH dated 8.8.1856 on page 23 of his book on 'Early Indian Cancellations'. The Stamp on the cover has been cancelled by the Circle of Bars Cancellations. Incidentally, which was the District Post Office with the name PUTTOOCOTTAH or 'PUDDOOCOTAH' mentioned by Jal Cooper and Renouf? One's mind would certainly rush to the town by that name which was the capital of the Native State of the same name but the identification may not be correct. It is doubtful whether there was any post office. District or otherwise, in Pooducotah State, in or around 1856. It is more likely that the office was 'Puttoocotah' under Tanjore, which was later on converted into a regular post office in 1866 and given the office number 214.

The first item of district post mail illustrated here (ill. 1) is a letter posted at a district office in or near Madura in June 1856. The stamp on the letter was cancelled by the Circle of Bars Cancellation, the despatch stamp is a circular seal with provision for writing the name of the office in manuscript. Unfortunately the manuscript writing is missing and hence the office name is not known. The letter was forwarded by the District Post Office to Madura P.O. from where it was sent to Madras on 30th June, 1856. The letter arrived in Madras on 3rd July.



Ill. 2

Another item in my collection is a letter sent from Villupuram addressed to Madras in June 1855. Unfortunately the stamp has been removed from the letter and hence the cancellation used is not known. The despatch hand stamp is of the semi-circular type with S.A.T.T. at the top and VILLUPURAM at the bottom, with the date 21.6.55 written in manuscript (see illustration 2). The letter was forwarded to Tindevanum P.O. and from there despatched to Madras. S.A.T.T. stands for South Arcot Talook Tapal. Renouf has recorded the use of N.A.T.T. (North Arcot Talook Tapal) in respect of Naggerly District Post Office.

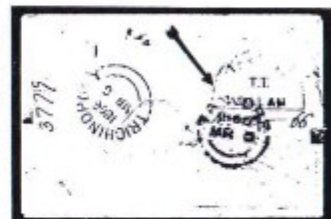
I have a letter posted at Tiruvaiuru District Post Office on 18th April, 1863, addressed to Madura. The stamp was cancelled by the Madras type 6 cancellation which appears to have been applied at Negapatam P.O. to which the letter was forwarded for onward despatch on 9th April to

Madura Via Trichinopoly. The semi-circular despatch stamp of Tiruvaiuru may be seen in Ill.3. It may be mentioned here that I have seen similar semi-circular handstamps emanating from the Andhra region of Madras Presidency using the letter D.T. (District Tapal) in place of 'T.T.'



Ill 3

From about 1865 it appears that office members were allotted to District Post Offices and they were provided cancellors incorporating the office number instead of the old dumb cancellor. The cancellation was triangular in shape filled with rows of dots or dashes framing in the centre the letter 'D' (District Post) over a number. The has been given the type number 29 by Renouf and Jal Cooper. Illustration 4 shows a cover posted in Vailam District Post Office (in Tanjore District) on 4th March, 1866, addressed to Poodoocottah, carrying the triangular cancellation. The number under 'D' is not clear but may be 219, which was its allotted number, towards the end of 1866. The despatch stamp used was the familiar semi-circular Tanjore T.T. handstamp similar to that shown in ill. 3.



Ill. 4 a



Ill. 4 b

The same type of triangular cancellation was used by the Tinnevely District Post Office in 1869. The office number in the cancellation is D/450. The despatch handstamp is of elliptical shape incorporating 'Tinnevely' in the first line, 'District Post Office' in the second line 'Paid' in the third line (see ill. 5). The letter was forwarded to Palamcottah Post Office and despatched from there to Madras on 17th October 1869. The latest date of use of this cancellation that I have in my collection is on a cover sent to Cork, Ireland in 1877. The office number is D/101. Unfortunately, only a portion of the cover is available. The piece has 12 stamps of East India. ½ anna with 11 of these cancellation on them.



Ill. 5



III. 6

The last by type of Distralt Post. Office cancellation recorded is a rhombus divided into a series of smaller rhombli with or without a number inset. Renouf has given the cancellation type number 28 and Jal Cooper number 31. Jal Cooper has recorded that this cancellation had been in use from 1855 to 1869 and that the covers he had seen with this cancellation had Talook Tapal despatch handstamp on them. The cancellation without number inset used by Manwuth (transferred from Madras to Bombay in 1866) may be seen in Ill.6. The cancellation with a number inset 150 may be seen in illustration 7.



III. 7



III. 8

This as far as I am aware, completes the types of District Post Office cancellations and handstamps so far recorded. It is quite possible how ever been quite intrigued by a letter bearing ½ anna stamp and addressed to Madura. The dispatch office stamp is rectangular incorporating the office name. PUNJAMAD (?) in the top line and 'POST PAID' below. The date '16.2.57' has been written in manuscript (illustration-8) The letter was forwarded to Palamcottah Post Office where the ½ anna stamp was cancelled with its type 6 cancellor with the office number C/135 and dispatched to Madura. The letter 'P' in the office name Punjamad is not very clear. My attempts to identify the office has not borne fruit so far. The answer may very well lie in some gazeteers of the period. It is quite possible that the despatch hand stamp was that of a District Post office.

(Courtesy : Ind Dak Feb, 1986)

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In continuing with the tradition of conducting competitive national level exhibitions, SIPA moved ahead in satiating the hunger of philatelists by organising two exhibitions in the past 4 years.

COVERPEX - 2020

South India Philatelists' Association, Chennai with the active support of the Department of Posts, Tamilnadu Circle conducted yet another successful Coverpex 2020 National Level Philatelic Covers Exhibition with participants from all over India, organized bya at Sanandaa Kalyana Mandapam, Rajakilpakkam, Chennai - 73 from 11th January 2020 to 13th January 2020. It was a Philatelic Exhibition with only Philatelic Covers, First Day Covers, Special Covers and Private Covers alone displayed. It was the first time in India that such a novel Philatelic Exhibition was conducted, which aroused the interest of philatelists' who collect only covers and waiting for such an appertained

The Competitive Class consisted of 119 entries displayed in 323 frames out of which 276 frames were in Senior Class, 34 frames in Youth Class and 13 frames in School Exhibits.

The overall standard of the Exhibits was found to be quite good, but in few exhibits, considerable scope for improvements was advised by the Jury.

Mr. Ghouse Ali Zameer from Bengaluru and Mr. S.K. Lakshmanan from Chennai were the Jury for this Exhibition.

A set of 4 machine cancelled Special Carried Covers were released on Gandhi theme.

9 Vermeil, 31 Silver, and 24 Bronze medals were awarded in competitive class. First, Second and Third Prizes were awarded in Youth and School exhibit classes.

SIPA AMRITPEX 2022

Once again, South India Philatelists' Association conducted a full scale National level Philatelic Exhibition styled as "SIPA Amritpex 2022" at the Olympia Tech Park in Guindy from 13th to 15th August 2022 coinciding with the 75th Independence Day celebrations.

The exhibition attracted a record number of entries : Traditional 28; Postal History 20; Postal Stationery 25; Thematic 246; Maximaphily 20; One Frame 20; Literature 12; Youth 90 and School 85, a total of 546. It is all the more appreciable as Special and First Day Covers were not allowed as per the Prospectus.

A Special Cover on Shri. Bashyam Arya, freedom fighter was released by Mr. Rajendra Kumar, Chief Postmaster General, Karnataka Circle who was additional charge as the Chief Postmaster General of Tamilnadu Circle.

The Jury team was headed by Mr. Rajesh Paharia from Jaipur, Mr. Nand Kishore Agarwal from Bengaluru, Mr. T. Ramalingeshwar Rao from Hyderabad assisted by two Apprentice Juries Mr. Kishore Chandak from Solapur and Mrs. Sundareswari from the Dept of Posts.

The following Medals were awarded : Gold 1; Large Vermeil 1; Vermeil 2; Large Silver 3; Silver 16; Silver Bronze 20; Bronze 19 and Certificate 2.

South India Philatelists' Association profusely thanked Mr. Ajit Chordia, Director of Olympia Tech Park for providing us the attractive venue with all the facilities and amenities free of cost and Mr. Jagannath Mani of Bengaluru for arranging the philatelic frames.

☆☆☆☆

200 YEARS OF POSTAL SERVICE IN BOMBAY (AD 1787 to AD 1987)

The first letter from Bombay that set to sail in a tin box on an armed cruiser to Egypt enroute England via the overland route and Alexandria port on November 30, 1787, was lost to posterity but it has the distinction of marking two centuries of the postal service in the "Bombay presidency" this year.

Although the last of the three presidencies to set up an organised postal service (Calcutta - 1774 and Madras - 1786), the Bombay network soon after it grew by leaps and bounds and by the mid-nineteenth century was one of the speediest and best in the country.

However in 1787, Bombay unlike Calcutta and Madras did not have a General Post Office (GPO) at all - only a Postal Commission at Apollo Pier in South Bombay with a post-master, who was paid no salary but a commission on the number of letters he undertook to dispatch and receive.

The Bombay GPO was officially opened only seven years later with Mr. Charles Elphinstone as the first Postmaster General (PMG). Keeping in with the tradition. PMGs in the three metropolitan GPOs are to this day known as "Presidency Postmasters".

The Bombay GPO moved from Apollo pier to the Central Telegraph Office building in 1869 from where it operated until it was permanently located in the present premises in 1913 (built then at a cost of Rs.17 lakhs).

The evolution of the postal system in the intervening period is quaint and interesting.

When the East India Company set up house here, they transported their correspondence home through a limited number of merchant vessels each year.

Although some records say that the first organized postal service came to India in 1668, the more reliable documents prove that it is only towards the end of the 17th century that the first efforts were made to set up a reliable network.

ONE-MAN Delivery

At the turn of the 17th century, the council of directors of the East India company decided to award a "contract" for the conveyance to and fro of letters to a "discreet powerful man" who would pay to the company not less than 400 to 500 pounds a year for the purpose.

Nonetheless it took almost another century before an agent was appointed in Egypt in 1787 to supervise the

interchange of dispatchers between England and India at Alexandria.

Inland, however, the letters were carried to and fro by messengers of "runners" - at four paise from each presidency. They set out from Bombay once every fortnight via Poona and Hyderabad and it took 25 days for these runners to each half-way to the other presidency and hand over the letters to their counterparts there.

While no postage was charged on the letters as such the rates for conveyance of letters varied in each of the presidencies, depending on the distance the runners would have to cover.

PRECARIOUS JOB

Between Madras and Bombay messengers had the most precarious job - they had to pass through the hostile territory of Tippu Sultan, which at the best of times was extremely dangerous to their personal safety. So a circuitous route by sea via Ongole and Poona was established, with the minimum rate being one and half to two rupees per letter.

The half-way point was Anjengo, near Trivandrum, for mail between Madras and Bombay and Masulipatnam for mail between Calcutta and Bombay.

The frequency of the service was once a fortnight. This was increased to a weekly dispatch to Calcutta in 1790.

Three runners or "Kissids" covered upto 18 kms at a stretch with drummers and "masaulchies" in attendance, announcing their passage and arrival.

In fact, the runners became such a popular sight that Rudyard Kipling immortalized them years later in a poem - bringing to light the difficulties they faced in traversing over hills and dales, through the deep jungles, battling with tigers and thieves alike.

Wrote Kipling

'In the name of the Empress of India make way Oh, lords of the jungle, wherever you run.

The woods are astir on the close of the day - We exiles are waiting for letters from home, Let the robber retreat, let the tiger turn tail. In the name of the Empress, the overland mail. With a jingle of bells as the dusk gathers it. He turns to footpath that leads up the hill, The bags on his back and a cloth round his chin And tucked in his waistband the post office bill. Despatched on this date as received by the rail, per runner two bags of the overland mail".
(Times of India)

(Courtesy -India's Stamp Journal 1987)

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1. Primer for beginners

SIPA has brought out the revised edition of the budding collectors awareness booklet titled "Stamp collecting for beginners" enriching with twelve pages of additional information multicolourfully. SIPA proudly announces that the First Edition of 5000 copies were exhausted in a few year's time. The revised edition is pocket friendly at Rs.50/ copy. Fully sponsored by SIPA, this edition is edited by the vice-president of SIPA. Mr. J. Rolands Nelson.

For copies contact : Mr. C.G. Baskar - 9444491111,
Mr.Magesh - 9840423567, Mr. Dilip Saboo -9282226186
Mr. Rolands Nelson - 9940681750,

2. Princely States of India - A Philatelic Overview

An informative multi-coloured library edition of a book of 276 pages has arrived in the World of philatelic literature.

The book intended to fill the knowledge bank of senior collectors with adequate information of philately about all the forty three princely states vividly gives details of their postal history, stamps and stationary with a little bit of their history and geography with illustrations and figures . It is to be noted that among the eight hundred and more princely states which occupied large area of pre-independent India during the years of 1860 - 1947, these forty three states had their own postal service within their states competing with the Imperial postal service in the British ruled Indian region.

The book is authored by Rolands Nelson, Vice - President SIPA and is priced at a collector friendly rate of Rs.695/-. Contact the author at 9940681750 for copies

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PRIVATE DAK SERVICE IN 1850

MUNGNEE RAM, of ZORABUR MULL's house had a private dak which ran from Ajmeer, Kotah via Vekri, Sawar, Jahazpur and Bundi, expenses Rs.100 per month. Regarding this post, the Rajputana Agent wrote 'in conversation with Zorawur Multi at Kotah last year, he informed that he paid nearly Rs. 3000 to the Company's dawks while his own establishment cost him about Rs.5000 per year. The Company's dawk could not take their frequent heavy packages.

A receipt in 1850 from Postmaster, Agra, reads :-
"Agra P.O. 2 July 1850 - Received one express letter for Kotah to the address of Mungnee Ram of Zorabur Mull, Pd. 55-12-0 (AGRA Post Paid)

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Monthly meeting

The Second Sunday March monthly meeting was held on 10th March 2024, at the Exhibition Hall, Philatelic Bureau, Anna Road, Chennai.

PPT presentations were done by

1. Dr. Arun, on "Corner Ornaments of 1854 lithographs" and
2. Mr. K.S.Palani on Centenary celebrated Philatelic museum of Egypt at Cairo.