

# STAMPED!

RAJALAKSHMI V.

Once known as the “king of hobbies”, philately has lost ground in today’s digital world, its appeal having waned, particularly among younger generations. South India Philatelists Association (SIPA) is working to renew interest in the hobby through various initiatives.

“Philately is on the decline,” says Mahesh Parek, secretary of SIPA. “People today are more absorbed in the digital world, which has distracted them from hobbies. The academic pressure on students leaves them with little time for hobbies. Earlier, when our parents read books we would borrow them and develop a love for reading. Now, with parents focused on social media, what can we expect from the younger generation?”

Besides, stamps not being as integral to the everyday experience as they were before the advent of electronic mail, special efforts are required to get the current generation (born into an



Students at an exhibition organised by the Department of Posts.  
FILE PHOTO

## Shoring up philately

overwhelmingly digital world) to pursue stamp collecting. Founded in 1957, SIPA is aware of this challenge.

“We visit schools and colleges, organise workshops, and host exhibitions to introduce students to philately. We show stamps from

different eras, helping them understand the significance of collecting,” says Parek. SIPA also organises monthly meetings at the Mount Road Philatelic Bureau, where collectors of all ages exchange ideas and share their collections. Over 30 stamps are re-

leased annually by the Indian Postal Service, and collectors can open a Philatelic Deposit (PD) Account at the post office with a minimum of ₹200.

“We have created a WhatsApp group where we share information about stamps from India and

around the world. Newcomers are encouraged to stay in the group for a month to learn and decide if they want to continue,” Parek explains. SIPA also provides free stamps to students and has published a beginner’s guide to philately, priced at ₹ 30.

“We regularly visit different schools across Chennai to train teachers and students about philately. The teachers then organise activities and events around the subject, and students have shown a keen interest in them. In fact, some schools have even started philately clubs,” says Mahesh Parek.

J. Rolands Nelson, president of SIPA, adds, “With the rise of digital markets, stamp trading has become more accessible, as stamps are now available online. Dealers use platforms such as WhatsApp and Instagram to trade, and e-versions of stamps are widely available across the Internet.”

For more information, visit [sipa.net.in](http://sipa.net.in)

## Meet a veteran philatelist



G. Ram Mohan

G. Ram Mohan, an 87-year-old philatelist from R.A. Puram, who has half-a-century of stamp collecting behind him, says the hobby can be both creative and rewarding, providing aesthetic enjoyment, mental engagement, and opportunities for social interaction among collectors. “Stamp collecting knows no age boundaries and of-

ten connects with other interests such as art, coin collecting and commerce,” says Ram Mohan.

“There is a method to collecting stamps,” he explains. “I enjoy focussing on specific themes. You can choose any topic—whether it is the life of a figure, flowers, architecture or history. Once you pick a theme, the stamps should be mounted on a thick A4 photography

sheets. While stamp albums are helpful for initial framing, they can later be transferred to thicker sheets for final display.”

He encourages beginners to start with simple themes and expand as they gain experience. Ram Mohan’s own award-winning collections include themes such as Tamil Nadu, the life of Mahatma Gandhi, and Sanskrit verses.



The Philatelic Bureau

## A field trip to the Philatelic Bureau

Located on the premises of Anna Salai post office, the Philatelic Bureau is a historic space dedicated to stamp enthusiasts. Housed in a former electric theatre, the bureau has been a part of the city’s heritage for over 80 years.

Inside, visitors can explore a vast collection of stamps that capture key moments in India’s history. These stamps reflect everything from Independence to cultural miles-

tones. The Bureau also hosts monthly workshops and events, where both novice and experienced collectors can learn about the art and significance of stamp collection. Exhibitions provide collectors the opportunity to showcase and share their collections, strengthening the local philatelic community.

The Bureau also releases new stamps, featuring historical figures and events, and connecting collectors through their shared

interests.

The Bureau welcomes schools for a tour of the place. One could send an email to [annaroadhodop@nic.in](mailto:annaroadhodop@nic.in) mentioning the day, time and number of students. A staff says they would make sure the philately promotion executive is available to give the group a presentation. They could also arrange to take the group around the post office

For details, call 044-28543199.