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SOUTH INDIA PHILATELISTS' ASSOCIATION

(FOUNDED 1956)

(AFFILIATED TO THE PHILATELIC CONGRESS OF INDIA)

REPORT OF SINGAPORE WORLD STAMP EXHIBITION

BY : P. GUPTA

Singapore '95, the first World Stamp Exhibition of its kind in the Republic was staged in the brand new Singapore International Convention & Exhibition Centre (Singapore Suntec Centre) from 1st to 10th September 1995.

The \$700 million (17500 million rupees) Singapore International Convention and Exhibition Centre is the finest purpose built convention and exhibition centres in Asia and one of the top convention centres in the world.

Singapore '95 organised by the Association of Singapore Philatelists under the patronage of the Federation Internationale de Philatelie (FIP) and the auspices of the Federation of Inter - Asian Philately (FIAP), had about 3,000 frames from 70 countries from more than 600 exhibitors. The Suntec Centre was officially opened by the President of the Republic of Singapore, Mr. Ong Teng Chong. The admission to the exhibition was free of charge and more than 3,50,000 overseas and local people visited the exhibition.

In conjunction with this exhibition, Singapore Post organised "Post Tech '95", an exhibition and conference featuring postal machines and equipment. The 7th Asian Pacific Postal Union Congress and the 25th Asian Postal Training Centre Governing Board Meeting was held at the Centre.

Singapore '95 was funded through sales from Singapore '95 Orchid series stamps comprising a total of 5 beautiful issues beginning in 1991 and culminating in 1995. Each year, a gutter pair of stamps featuring orchids and a miniature (souvenir) sheet are released. Each miniature sheet depicts a different colourful insight into Singapore.

Singapore '95 was an event to be remembered by all the participants, be they stamp collectors, visitors, delegates, stand holders, juries or commissioners. Covering 12,000 square metres of floor space on the fourth level of the Singapore Suntec Centre, the event was the largest international show so far. Everybody had something to look forward to. Rare and priceless exhibitions from the Queen's Collections and other renowned collectors, the mint block of four - France vermilion tete - beche was displayed in the Court of Honour section and 3,000 frames of world class exhibits graced the exhibition floor. Sales booth manned by postal administration and stamp dealers provided a wide range of philatelic services that pleased even the most discerning collectors.

In the exhibition hall, there was a Young Collectors' Corner, specially designed for youths of 7 to 21 years old, housing various educational and interactive philatelic activities such as 'How to Begin a Stamp Collection', games promoting team spirit and collaboration amongst children and also computer games to stimulate the young mind's interest in stamp designing and philately.

During the exhibition, there were several meetings of Commission of FIP. I attended the Postal Stationery Commission headed by Mr. Alan Huggins and Postal H. Jensen. Meetings of the FIP Board of Directors and FIAP Executive Committee were also held during the exhibition.

There were more than two hundred sales booths selling collectibles from around the world, with special activities for participants from auctions and seminars to talks and archival displays.

SIPA MEETINGS

Second Sunday of every month - Regular meeting at the Philatelic Bureau, Anna Road Post office, Madras - 600 002 (10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.) (first and third Sunday of every month - Auction meeting at our Library Hall at 6 Nannian Street, Madras - 3 (Timing 10.45 am. to 1 p.m.)
SIPA Library Open Tuesday & Sunday, 6 Nannian Street, Madras - 3. (7 p.m. to 8 p.m.)

THE FUTURE OF PHILATELY IN INDIA

By **BRIG. D.S. VIRG** (Retd) President, Philatlic Congress of India

The hobby of philately will live as long as postage stamps and related material remain in use and are available to the public. For quite some time the pessimists have been predicting to coming demise of the postage stamp on ouster by electronic devices. In a recent interview the Post Master General of America was asked whether in view of E. Mail, Fax Mail and other new technology, the postage stamp will become obsolete. He replied in an emphatic negative but did not rule out the possibility in the future of offering additionally E - Mail with an electronic signature which could some how be put on collectable paper. If that is the position in U.S.A. we can safely assume that postage stamps and philately will remain alive in India in the foreseeable future.

Remaining alive and moving at our present slow pace is one thing but catching up with the advanced countries in the East and west is in another matter. In spite of the best efforts of all philatelists in India does not exceed 50,000 if that. The few at the top are among the best in the world, having built up expensive collections over a long period. The middle level are moderate in competitive performance and the large majority are of poor International standard. At the Signapore World Exhibition in September the Youth and Literature Classes each garnered a lowly bronze medal. There are some bright spots. Among the 50 old stamp societies affiliated to P.C.I. know of about half a dozen who are active, thriving and self reliant and have thier own journals. In my short list are our hosts, Ludhiana Philatelic Club, Empire of India Philatelics' Society, Bombay South India Philatelic Association, Madras, Jamshedpur, and Bhilai Clubs. I am sure there are some more but much too few. We are also proud of a couple of our philatelic magazines and the PCI's Signet is now catching up to the excellence of pre - 1990 issues both in regularity and contents. My predecesor, Col. Shenoj of Bangalore brings out, on his own initiative, a philatelic quarterly "Mayur" for the children which has reached a good circulation.

The future well - being of philately is primarily in the hands of us philatelists, particularly that of our younger leaders. But there are many daunting handicaps to cross for which we need outside help. I deal with each of them and suggest remedial meausres.

The first and foremost is the ignorance and apathy to philately of the our large and

growing educated middle class and as a corolary, the public men in and outside the legislatures and government, senior bureaucrats, the media, educational authorities, and the parents of the student community. Some of you may remember that about 20 years ago I was here at the Regional Stamp Show and the famous, M.S. Randhawa, an eminent retired I.C.S. and a man of all talents, gave away the prizes. Before the ceremony he told me that he knew there was a hobby of stamp collecting but had always thought that 'philately' was some thing like 'flately' In 1978 we held a Youth Stamp Show at Delhi. Before that I preached philately at all major schools. A large number of students came for the show but no teacher, At Inpex 93 at Calcutta, the leading paper. "The Statesman" had no more than a line or two about the opening, progress and prize - giving.

We have to put across to the public that the world wide hobby of collecting postal material called philately is educative, informative and relaxing. It channels the enthusiasm of the young people into a friendly pursuit which inculcates an awarens of the history, culture and natural wealth of India and the rest of the world, and keeps them out of trouble. We philatelists and our patron and provider, the Post Office, have to do this through publicity and personal contact. When the PCI Trust gets going, it should undertake this as an urgent task.

Secondly, we need greater support from the Post Office. In the Seventies and up to the end of the Eighties, the heart of Post Office was in the promotion of philately. Regional and National Exhibitions were held fairly regularly - and they were well attended by the philatelists. The Philatelic Advisory Committee, in which we were well represented, listened sympathetically to our advice. The first International Exhibition was held in 1973. The Asiana 77 for Asia and the Pacific was organised by PCI with the generous support from Karnataka State and the Post Office. The followng & larger world Exhibitions under F.I.P. Patronag event organised by the Post office on our behalf in 1980 and 1989. The Postal Staff College inculcated the virtues of learning and promoting philately as a line of postal business. Then the enthusiasm waned considerably (though the Regional Exhibitions continued to be held regularly every two years) frustrated presumbaly by the fallof philatelic sales. The National was delayed by 4 years. The exhibiting of scarce preparatory

Stamp material which is a must for high awards and is shown universally in the rest of the world, was banned for public display if printed in India after mid - 1947. No help was given to exhibitors showing overseas either to limit or abolish the expensive Archelological Survey checks on old material, and in the new Advisory Committee, our representation was reduced from 5 to 3 members in a strength of 32. Now we are told that the National and grouped Regional will be held every 4 years. I have recieved utmost courtesy from the Department but can claim no concrete success in my proposals.

I will circulate a paper on the two points mentioned above at the first meeting of the new Advisory Committee and I shall recommend to the PCI to wait on the Head of the Department and the Minister to represent our case.

Thirdly, before I mention our friends, the Stamp Dealers, I wish to examine our own house. Some philatelists complain that the PCI is much concerned with high medals in foreign exhibitions, appointment of Commissioners and Judges thereto, and in enforcing the strict FIP standards for evaluaiton of exhibits at Regional and National Exhibitions. They want more attention to the problems of the comon philatelists in finding suitable material at moderate cost, helping them with the lcoal Post Offices and instructing them in preparing their exhibits. Some of these things need to be dealt with by the local senior PCI members.

The PCI is a Federation though in fact it has no State or Regional Associaitons affiliated to it for conducting most of State and Regional Philatelic problems. I suggest a restructuring of PCI/ State / Regional Associaitons to which Societies in their jurisdiction are affiliated and which in their turn are affiliated to the PCI continues to control policy and relations with HQ Post Office, FIP and FIAP. The PCI to continues to carry its Llife Members and run the Signet. To promote philately among the young and adult beginners and others who do not wish to participate in foreign exhibitions, we should, perhaps, have two streams in competiitive Regional and National Exhibitions. "A" stream for the above - mentioned category of competitors for evaluation under simpler rules (to be framed by PCI) "B" stream for competitors who wish their exhibits to be judged, as now, under FIP rules. (This is not such a radical proposal as some part of it was suggested earlier by Col. ShenoI for the Regionals and the whole proposal is being much discussed by American philatelists)

Lastly, The Stamp Dealers are the fourth pillar of philately Except for new issues of our Post Office, they are the providers to the collectors of all the philatelic materials and aids for using them. There is a misconception that I am not their friend.

It is true that I do not meet them as often as other philatelists do but that is because I am not a collector. I was introduced to philately by Jal Cooper, R.F. Shroff and C.N. Chandra while I was in service and Manik Jain taught me how to prepare an exhibit for APS for Indipex in 1973. But I never hesitate to condhem any malpractice that comes to my notice. My great regret is that Indian dealers help the top philatelist but ignore the needs of the beginners and middle and low level comiptiors. I also note that our very affluent Dealers make little contribution to the poor finances of the PCI of which many of them are Life Members and two are in Council. The only remedial measure I can think of is a meeting between the PCI and representatives of Indian Stamp Dealers Associaion to clear mutual doubts and misgivings and make our respective cases to each other.

I am thankful to the distignguised audience for bearing up with my long paper. The presentation and suggestions made by me are in my personal capacity and not as the President or spokesman of PCI.

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TAKING INDIAN PHILATELY FORWARD

Vispi S. Dastur

The prophets of doom seem to be once again at work and appear to be sounding the death knell of Indian philately. These days we hear that the advent of T.V. and video in the last few years is killing the hobby. T.V. and video have made an onslaught on leisure time all over the world. In India T.V. has spread its tentacles over all the big cities and almost whole of the country and there is also a boom in video. One effect of this is that in the big cities one sees bookshops closing down and book circulating libraries being converted into video libraries. In the last few years we have kept the old and the young glued to the idiot box leaving very little time for wholesome, constructive and educational hobbies like stamp collecting.

Some time back, in an old foreign philatelic journal, we read of similar prophecies of doom in the early nineteen thirties at the advent of the "talking" movies and the radio. But luckily for us, these prophecies were not fulfilled and stamp collecting has not only survived in the last half century but has also prospered; it has become a systematic study of not only the postage stamp but also of postal stationery and postal history.

So, one need not be dejected about the very survival of the hobby. In our view this interesting and illuminating hobby will continue to attract persons of all ages. One can't help wondering whether philately is such a tender and delicate hobby that it must be

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constantly watered and fertilised; we are sure that it can and does offer plenty of fascination to those who have a bent for it. We reiterate our firm belief that postage stamps will continue to exercise their peculiar charm on certain men, women and children for many generations to come. The recent auction realisations also prove the skeptics wrong.

However, one should not be complacent. In the years to come a concerted effort must be made by all concerned with the hobby to promote it. There is no sense insaying that promotion of the hobby should be done exclusively by the Department of Posts as it benefits the most from the sale of stamps to the philatelists.

Similarly, one cannot shelve one's responsibility by saying that the apex body of philatelists in India, the Philatelic Congress of India should be held solely responsible for the slow progress in this connection.

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In our opinion, the promotion and survival of the hobby requires the active cooperation of the Department of Posts which issues the postage stamps in the country, the P.C.I. the leading All - India philatelic societies, the local philatelic clubs, the philatelic journals, the stamp dealers and each and every stamp collector. The Department of Posts with its unique position and the funds at its disposal and as one of the main beneficiaries of the hobby must ponder over the matter and see how it can promote the hobby in the country. Here are some points which could be considered by the Department and all concerned:

1. India is a poor country and we believe, has problems which need greater priorities than stamp collecting. However, like a prudent businessman the Department should set aside 10 to 15% of its philatelic revenue for the promotion of the hobby.
2. The Department of Posts has been holding exhibitions at State, National and International levels; pray, why has it discontinued the District level exhibitions which had been started around 1976? These were exhibitions which took the hobby to the grassroots and spread the message of philately amongst the masses in various small towns all over the country. We would strongly urge the Department to apply its mind to this matter and once again hold these District level exhibitions throughout the country.
3. A Philatelic Trust or Foundation could be created on lines similar to the one in U.K. and other philatelically advanced countries but taking into consideration the Indian conditions. The P.C.I. has formed a Trust but support from the Departments and philatelists is required.
4. The formation and expansion of Stamps Clubs in schools all over the country should be encouraged by the Department as well as the P.C.I.
5. The Department could hold small exclusive inter-school exhibitions at the city, district, state and national levels.
6. Philatelic kits and booklets could be supplied free or at subsidised rates to the clubs and societies by the Department out of its philatelic income.
7. A lesser number of stamps, especially personality stamps would be welcomed by the collectors; the Department should not kill the goose that lays the golden egg.
8. Better and more attractive designs are absolutely essential. Indian stamps are to be popular both in India and abroad.
9. Wide advance publicity in India and abroad through philatelic journals, the lay press, radio and T.V. is required. You will be surprised to learn that an eminent Indian stamp journal does not

receive in advance any photographs or literature from the Postal Department of its own country even belatedly, whereas, it is literally bombarded with photos, literature etc., from countries all over the world.

10. More stamps on the flora, fauna, culture, festivals, art, architecture and other themes would not only give an idea of India's heritage to Indians and foreigners but also attract new collectors to the hobby.
11. Regular use by the Post Office in the country of Postal slogan cancellations propagating the hobby of stamp collecting such as "Collect Indian Stamps", "Stamp Collecting Is Fun" etc., in English, Hindi and regional languages could also help.
12. Competitions for stamp designing by outside artists, children etc., would create enthusiasm and interest in stamps.
13. Philatelic workshops in schools and colleges could be regularly held in addition to those held at Exhibitions.
14. If we cannot beat the T.V. boom we should join in it by having stamp programmes, displayed talks, stamp shows, etc., on T.V. so as to attract more beginners towards this informative hobby.
15. Holding of stamp release functions at various places would also generate awareness of stamps.
16. Displaying the more attractive multicoloured Indian stamps at airports, railway stations, post offices, major hotels etc., will also attract attention to Indian stamps.
17. The museums in the various towns could have a Stamps and Postal History Section.
18. Financial help to the societies and journals by way of advertisement or other help by the Department from its philatelic income would also help them in their efforts to promote the hobby.
19. The Department and the P.C.I. should endeavour to have the import restrictions on stamps and philatelic accessories, etc., removed partially, if not completely so that each genuine collector gets atleast some amount of foreign exchange for importing these items.
20. Film on stamp collecting and Indian stamps could be shown in theatres all over India through the Films Division, etc.,
21. Why not a properly produced video film on stamp collecting? This should be a professional effort with the help of senior philatelists and should cover all aspects of the hobby and not one's pet subject only. Whatever happened to the video film taken at Inpex - 86, Jaipur ?

22. Why can't we, in order to draw attention to the hobby, have a National Stamp Day or Stamp Week as is being done in many countries like Canada, England, Australia, etc.,
23. In these days of escalating postal rates we find postal stationery with the same design being continued for years with only the value being changed; we could have a change in designs of post cards, envelopes etc. at regular intervals.
24. We could consider issuing commemorative postal stationery on some special important occasions.
The aerogramme, which is India's ambassador to foreign countries could be made more attractive and could depict our tourist attractions, flora, fauna, achievements, etc. These steps would not only be welcomed by postal stationery collectors but also attract attention to the country.
25. We could consider bringing out special stamp booklets with advertisements which could also earn revenue for the Department.
26. Some years back the Department had brought out New Year Greeting Cards with a stamp design on the cover and the actual stamp inside. We suggest that such New years cards be brought out for sale to collectors and others by early August of each year so that they can be used on the Parsee, Hindu, Muslim, Christian etc., New Years. Reasonably priced, they could be bought by collectors and others and would propagate Indian stamps in India and abroad.
27. Some years back, the Post Master Generals used to hold monthly bimonthly meetings with the local philatelists. The Department could consider resuming these meetings which would be in the nature of feed back to the Department.
28. The Department could consider issuing a stamp on stamp collecting as has been done by many countries including Sweden, U.S.A., U.N.

Lack of finance and personal are reasons often given by the Department for the short - falls, but, in view of its income from philately, and in its own interest it should seriously consider implementing the various suggestions.

The philatelist members of the Philatelic Advisory Committee should endeavour to do their best and constant repetition by philatelists may be necessary to achieve our goals.

The all India societies and the local stamp clubs could help the Department of Posts and the P.C.I. in all their laudable undertakings in connection with the promotion of the hobby. The philatelic journals could carry simple articles for the newcomers and also they could be kept in school and college libraries, clubs at philatelic bureaux, etc.,

Without our dealer friends the very survival of the hobby would be jeopardised. Similarly, the very livelihood and survival of our dealer friends is dependent on the hobby. They are in direct contact with the collector as well as the prospective collector. By being a friend and guide to the collector, especially the beginners, by their fair dealings, by selling stamps which are authentically issued by proper stamp issuing countries, by supporting the societies and the journals they can do much to ensure the survival and progress of this hobby which we all love so much and which we feel is to their own advantage. We have fond memories of some dear dealer friends who have, over the years, helped, inspired and guided us in our philatelic endeavours. Our dealer friends should keep before their mind's eye the long term interests of the hobby and their own long term prospects and not look for short term quick unethical gains as is being done by some all over the world.

They could ensure that fakes and forgeries do not pass through their hands. Forgeries were responsible for the fall, some time back, in the interest in Indian States stamps and covers. The same is likely to happen to the interest of collectors in Indian Postal History if the recent spate of forgeries of cancellations, censor markings, railway, postagedue, instructional and other postal markings is not stopped at the earliest.

Some of our readers may feel that the above suggestions given by us are the oft repeated ones but we strongly feel that one must knock at the door continuously if one wants to achieve the goal.

Remember that the water jar becomes full in the course of time by the constant dripping of drops of water. Perseverance gains its mead and patience wins the race.

The American President, John Kennedy has said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country". Let us think in a positive way and also act accordingly; each one of us philatelists must do some serious introspection and see what he, as a collector, can do for the promotion of the hobby. Let him give something to that hobby from which he has derived so much pleasure and learning. He could give talks on stamp collecting in schools, colleges, Rotary, Lions, etc., meetings. Each collector can also, personally, in his own small way promote the hobby on a person to person basis by spreading the message of philately. Let us remember the ancient Indian 'Guru - Shishya' way of individual teaching and let "EACH ONE TEACH ONE" so that Indian Philately not only survives but also prospers in he years to come.

Friends, these are a few thoughts we share with you, your comments and views on this significant task of taking Indian philately forward are welcome.



From Left to Right

Mr. M. T. KARUNAKARAN, Mr. G.MADANMOHAN DAS Joint Secretaries, Ecopex '95, Dr M. GOPALA KRISHNAN, Chairman & Managing Director declaring open the Ecopex '95 Exhibition by cutting the Ribbon, Mr. AJIT CHORADIA, Vice - Chairman, Mr. MADHUSUDAN KHEMKA, Director M/s. NEPC Micon Ltd., and Mr. S. BRAHMANANDAM, Patron, Ecopex '95 and Chief Postmaster General Tamilnadu Circel are in the picture.

Left to right

Mr. D.H. Rao, President, SIPA and Vice-Chairman Ecopex '95, Mr. S. Brahmanandam, Patron, Ecopex '95 and CPMG, Tamilnadu circle addressing the gathering, Mr. U. Mohan Rao, Chairman, Ecopex '95 Ecopex '95 and M.D., Cutfast Abarasives TOOLS Ltd., Mr. Shanker, IAS, Chairman, Tamilnadu Pollution Control Board who Released the Ecopex '95 Souvenir.



Left to Right

Mr. S. Brahmandam, Patron, Ecopex '95 and CPMG Tamilnadu Circle addressing gathering, Sri G.M. Pujari, Jury, Rtn. PDG B. Viswanatha Reddi, M.D., Chandamama Publications with Srimathi Rani Viswanatha Reddi who distributed the prizes.



Left to right

Rtn. PGD. B. Viswanatha Reddi grace the moments to Mr. Bhatia, Chief Zalit Kala , Mr. G. Balakrishnadoss, Secretary, SIPA is all smiles.





(From Left to Right)

Mr. U. MOHAN RAO, Chairman Ecopex '95
 Dr. M. GOPALAKRISHNAN, Chairman & Managing Director, Indian Bank, Mr. SHANKAR, I.A.S., Chairman, Tamilnadu Pollution Control Board and Sri. S. Brahmanandam, Chief Post Master Genral, Tamilnadu Circle

From Left to Right

Mr. G.M.Pajari, Jury, Mr. Ajit Choradia, Vice-Chairman Ecopex'95, Presenting Memento to Rotarian Past Distriict Governor B. Viswanatha Reddy, Managing Director, Chandamama Publications and Srimathi Rani Viswanatha Reddy, distributed the prizes.



From Left to Right

Dr. M. GOPALAKRISHNAN, Chairman and Managing Director Indian Bank giving the Inaugural address. Mr. D.H. RAO Vice-Chairman Ecopex '95, Sri MADHUSUDAN KHENKA, Director M/S NEPC Micon Ltd., & Mr. U. MOHAN RAO, chairman & Managing Director, Cutfast Abrasives Private Ltd., & Chairman, ECOPEX '95



From Left to Right

Mr.U MOHAN RAO, Chairman, ECOPEX '95, Mr. M. GOPALAKRISHNAN, Chairman & Managing Director, Indian Bank, who inaugurated & lighted the Kuthuvilaku of Ecopex '95 Exhibition receiving the ECOPEX '95 Souvenir from Mr. SHANKER, I.A.S. Chairman, Tamilnadu Pollution Control Board, who released Souvenir, Mr. S. BRAHMANANDAN, Partron, Ecopex '95 and Chief Post Master General, Tamilnadu Circle claps his hands.





Left to right
 Mr. D.H. Rao, Vice Chairman Ecopex '95,
 Mr. G.M.Pujari Jury, Mr. S. Brahmananadam, Patron
 Ecopex '95 and CHIEF POSTMASTER GENERAL,
 Tamil Nadu Circle Presenting Special Covers set to
 Rtn. PDG. B. Viswanatha Reddi, M.D., Chandamam
 Publications who gave Valenictory address and Mrs.
 Rani Viswanatha Reddy (Seated)
 who distributed the prizes.

Mrs. Rani Viswanatha Reddi (Seated)
 Mr. G. Amarchand, Vice-Chairman Ecopex '95,
 Vice - President of the CITI Bank, Madras,
 receiving the Mememto from Mr. K. Prasad Treas-
 urer Ecopex '95 and Mr. Ajit Choradia
 Vice - Chairman, Ecopex '95



Left to Right
 Vice - President, Citi Bank, Madras addressing
 the gathering with Mr. G.M.Pujari, Jury,
 Mr. S. Brahmanandam, Patron Ecopex '95
 and CPMG, Tamilnadu Circle and
 Mr. Rtn. PDG B. Viswanatha Reddi
 seated on the dias.

Mr. S. Brahmanandam, Patron, Ecopex '95
 presenting a set of Special Ecopex Covers
 to Vice - President, Citi Bank, Madras.

