



SIPA Bulletin

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EDITORIAL

We have very good news from the Department of Posts, Government of India. ALLOTMENT Letters have been sent to the prospective competitors and a few have been sent letter informing them to keep their exhibits ready in case of a few drop outs in the last minutes at the Exhibition Hall of INDEPEX ASIANA - 2000 14th ASIAN INTERNATIONAL PHILATELIC EXHIBITION to be held at Nethaji Indoor Stadium, Calcutta from 7th December, 2000. Nearly 90% of our members have been allotted entries. Good news and assemble your collections, give a good write up and consult your seniors and people well versed how to improve your exhibits. As a member of the Organising Committee and as Patron of the South India Philatelists' Association, I warmly welcome all Member Federations and philatelists from all parts to participate in this exhibition. I am glad to state that Haji M.A. Sayeed from Dubai, Life Member of our Association will bring the cream of India Classics from his Family Members and is also the Commissioner from United Arab Emirates.

INDEPEX ASIANA - 2000 BULLETIN No. 2 has come out with the President of India as the Patron in Chief; Message of Mr. Surjit Congvatana, FIAP Coordinator; Shri B.N. SOM, Secretary to the Govt. of India and Director General, India Post as President of the Exhibition and the names and addresses of the Organising Committee as also various committees. It also contains a Tentative Programme for Indepex Asiana - 2000 Exhibition; 18 Commissioners with their Photos; 21 Jurors and three Apprentice Jury, of course with their passport size photos. It also contains the Design of the Medals, a PLAN of the Exhibition, Rules of the Booth Holders; and Travel Regulations. I have Reserved for the last the article of Postal History of Calcutta (1854 - 1947) by Ashok Bayanwala, Life Member of our Association and Postal History Research Exhibitor.

Congratulations to Shri B.N. Som: Editor-In-Chief, Philately News Letter as the Secretary, Dept. of Posts and wishes him grater honours in the months to come. National Philatelic Museum gets a new look and was inaugurated on 17.8.2000 by Shri Ram Vilas Paswan, Minister of Communications in the

august presence of Shri Tapan Sikdar, Minister of State for Communications, Shri S. Sahoo, President of Philatelic Congress of India, members of the PCI and many more dignitaries. Another good news is that Indian Philately took a big leap forward on 20th April 2000 when the Minister of State for Communications launched the website of Indepex Asiana - 2000 at a function at Calcutta. The website WWW.INDEPEXASIANA 2000 com gives all details about the Exhibitions starting from the names of the Commissioners and Jury with their addresses, members of the different committees, the Special Regulations for the Exhibition etc., Encouraged by the positive feed back received from different quarters, the website has been entered in the Website Evaluation Competition conducted by the Federation Internationale de Philatele. Results of the Stamp Design Competition 99 have been announced. Chennai bags Senior Category First Prize Chi. S. Praveen and Chi. Daya Maheswaran Joint Second Prize, both from Padma Seshadri Secondary and Bala Bhavan Hr. Sec. School, Chennai - 78. Hearty Congratulations from SIPA to the winners. UPU Stamp Design Competition - Dialogue among Civilization is the subject for painting and in India entries for this competition has been called for by the CPMGs of the respective Circles and last date for receipt of entries is 7th August. Quiz and Painting competitions were held in our State and our Members (SIPA) gave their unstinted support in the conduct of the same. July - August 2000 Volume - IV has come out covering TANAPEX 2000 (National News); Exhibitions - INTERNATIONAL NEWS; World's First Personalised Stamps and Circle Level activities also. Please do visit Indepex Asiana - 2000 and some the GEMS of Indian Classics on Show - as India has the richest heritage in Philately, has the distinction of having issued stamps since 1854 and also the proud privilege of having hosted the First Asian International Stamp Exhibition in 1977. I personally would like to invite all Philatelists to visit Indepex Asiana 2000.

I looking forward to seeing you in decemper 2000.

Wishing you all a happy prosperous diwali.

Editor : G. Madan Mohan Das

Our Second Sunday Meetings were held regularly where 30 members attended with President Shri. Balakrishna Das presiding. Shri. G. Madan Mohan Das, Spoke. New members introduced themselves. Talks by members with display, News/Views invited.

XXVII OLYMPICS

17.09.2000 300,600,1000,1500 3 million each



The Olympic Games, held once in every four years, are the greatest sporting event on the globe. They celebrate human excellence, the pinnacle of which is achieved when the mind and body strive in unison, motivated by a spirit of adventure.

The ancient Olympic celebrations, which had its origin in Greece in the eighth century B.C., came to an end in 393

A.D. when the games were abolished by the Roman emperor Theodosius I, after Greece had lost its independence. However, the efforts of Baron Pierre Coubertin (1863 - 1937) of France led to the revival of the Olympics towards the end of 19th Century. The games of the I Olympiad of the modern cycle were held under the patronage of the King of Greece in 1896 in Athens. The games have been held regularly every 4 years thereafter, except for the years of the two world wars, and have grown in number of sports, besides the number of disciplines within each sport. The olympic motto "Citius, Altius, Fortius" - swifter, higher, stronger, made its appearance at the Antwerp games in 1922. Its inventor was a Dominican, Father Henry Didon.

India is one of the oldest members of the International Olympic family. India's participation in Olympic Games dates back to 1920 and the country has been participating in all the Olympic Games ever since. India has the credit of winning six gold medals in consecutive Olympic Games in Hockey till 1956. Thereafter in Tokyo and Moscow Olympics, gold medals were won. India has the credit of occupying the fourth place in 1956 Olympic games in Football, the game of the masses.

To improve the India's medal tally in the Olympic Games, the country is on course to adopt modern scientific approach in grooming talented youth in sports, backed by professional administrative management of sports. The National Sports Policy of the country spells out a time-bound programme to provide infrastructure of sports and physical education in villages and towns and appropriate equipment to sports persons. It enjoins upon the governments to preserve playfields and open spaces and emphasises the necessity of effective training and competition programmes for preparation of national teams to participate in international competitions. The Government has also launched various sports promotion schemes for creation of infrastructure as well as providing incentives to sports persons.

Theme : Olympics, Sports, Recreation.

29.09.2000 300,300,300,300 3 Million each



India's space programme was formerly organised in 1972 when the Department of Space was established. The space programme, since its inception,

has been guided by a vision that has emphasized the application of space technology specifically in the areas of telecommunication, television broadcasting, meteorology and resources survey and management. Development of satellites, launch vehicles and associated ground systems is essential to the space programme objective. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), National Remote Sensing Agency and Physical Research Laboratory are the agencies for executing the programme.

Major Space Systems

India has established two main space systems - the Indian National Satellite (INSAT) system and Indian Remote Sensing Satellite (IRS) system, which have become important elements of national infrastructure. INSAT is one of world's largest multipurpose domestic satellite system providing services in the area of telecommunications, television broadcasting, educational television, business communication, mobile communication, search and rescue and meteorology.

Launch Vehicle Technology

Launch vehicle development which started in a modest way through SLV-3 which could put 40 kg class Satellite into near earth orbit received a major boost through the successful flights of the Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicle (ASLV), which injected the SROSS Satellites into low earth orbits, in 1992 and 1994. With a view to make its space programme self reliant, India has subsequently developed and commissioned the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) and Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV).

Space Science

Research in space is actively pursued through the Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad, Space Physics Laboratory, Thiruvananthapuram, Space Applications Centre, Ahmedabad and ISRO Satellite Centre, Bangalore.

The first two stamps are on OCEANSAT-1 and INSAT-3B respectively, representing the country's latest achievements in satellite technology. The third stamp in setenant format carries a painting by S. Praveen, winner of the 1st Prize in the senior category in Stamp Design Competition for Children: 1999 on the theme 'India in Space-2025'.

Theme : Science, Space, Painting.

MADHUBANI - MITHILA PAINTING

15.10.2000 300, 300, 300 & 500, 1000 3.0 million each



The district of Madhubani in Bihar forms part of the broader geographical and cultural area called Mithila. Vibrant traditions of ritual paintings have been practised by women in the region since centuries, as a simple means of self expression. This style of painting is today known alternatively by the names "Madhubani/ Mithila painting".

The women of the region conventionally drew geometrical diagrams known as 'Aripan' on mud and cowdung plastered floor, their fingers dipped in rice paste. The nuptial chamber of the bride was decorated with ritualistic wall paintings, the central wall adorned with an assemblage of symbolic images signifying proliferation of life and growth: lotus plant motif with stylised flowers, the bamboo grove, fishes,

birds and other animals. The side wall usually depicted scenes from mythology. These paintings centre around the calendar of annual ritual events: important sacraments such as birth or weddings.

Traditionally the women of Madhubani used pigments derived from natural substances: vermilion powder mixed with mustard seed and ground on a mill stone gave a bright red, a mixture of cowdung and lampblack combined with goat's milk produced greenish black, 'Pevdi', a mineral, was used for lemon yellow and turmeric for yellow ochre. Indigo and geru, red clay, mixed with gum arabicum or goat's milk provided blue and Indian red, respectively, as mentioned earlier, rice paste was used for white.

One of the main directions that Madhubani painting took after the introduction of paper was to create a series of narrative paintings related to mythological stories, drawing on images from 'Ram Lila' and 'Krishna Lila / folk theatrical performances which were popular in the area.

The designs of the four stamps are based on paintings representing a cross section of the rural social frame-work, incorporating paintings made by women artists from the different strata of the society. They also symbolise the levels of excellence achieved by women in the tradition of Indian folk art. The first and second stamps, depicting the paintings "Flower Girls" by Smt. Nirmala Devi and "Bali and Sugriva" by Smt. Sanjula Devi respectively, possess the extraordinary charm of primordial art reflected in highly stylised and simplified imagery. The third stamp, featuring the painting "Krishna with Gopies" by Smt. Anmana Devi draws upon mythology for its central theme. The fourth stamp shows detail of the central wall of a 'Kohbar-Ghar', mural painted by late Smt. Ganga Devi at the 'Crafts Museum', New Delhi. It shows the lotus plant motif, a symbol of growth and fertility.

Theme : Paintings, Arts.

RAJKUMAR SHUKLA

16.10.2000 300 0.1 million



In India's struggle for Independence, the "Champaran Satyagraha" marks a very important stage. Raj Kumar Shukla drew the attention of Mahatma Gandhi, who had just returned from South Africa, to the plight of the peasants suffering under an oppressive system established by European indigo planters. Besides other excesses they were forced to cultivate indigo on 3/20 part of their holding and sell it to the planters at prices fixed by the

planters. This marked Gandhiji's entry into the India's Struggle for Freedom. On his arrival at Motihari, the district headquarters, accompanied by Raj Kumar Shukla, Gandhiji was ordered to leave by the next available train which he refused to do and was arrested. He was released and the ban order was withdrawn in the face of a "Satyagraha" threat. Gandhiji conducted an open enquiry into the peasants' grievances. The Government had to appoint an enquiry committee with Gandhiji as a member. This led to the abolition of the system.

Raj Kumar Shukla has been described by Gandhiji in his "Atmakatha", as a man whose suffering gave him the strength to rise against the odds. In his letter to Gandhiji he wrote -

"Respected Mahatma, you hear the stories of others everyday. Today please listen to my story I want to draw your attention to the promise made by you in the Lucknow Congress that you would come to Champaran. The time has come for you to fulfil your promise. 19 lakhs suffering people of Champaran are waiting to see you."

Gandhiji reached Patna on 10 April, 1917 and on 16 April he reached Motihari accompanied by Raj Kumar Shukla. Under Gandhiji's leadership to historic "Champaran Stayagraha" began. The contribution of Raj Kumar Shukla is reflected in the writings of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, first President of India, Acharya Kriplani and of course Mahatma Gandhiji himself. Raj Kumar Shukla maintained a diary in which he was given an account of struggle against the atrocities of the indigo planters, atrocities so movingly depicted by Deen Bandhu Mitra in "Neel Darpan", a play that was translated by Michael Madhusudan Dutt.

This year marks the 125th Birth Anniversary of Raj Kumar Shukla.

Theme : Patriot, Freedom Fighter, Leader

17.10.2000

300

0.4 million



Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma (1918-1999), former President of India, was one of the most distinguished and beloved sons of the country, who combined great humility with immense learning.

Dr. Sharma was actively involved in the Freedom Struggle and suffered brutalities of the British colonial regime. Born in August, 1918, at Bhopal, Dr. Sharma had his initial education at St. John's College,

Agra and went on to the Allahabad and Lucknow Universities. He studied law, history, politics and culture at reputed western institutions such as the Cambridge University and Harvard Law School. He was a teacher of law at Lucknow University and at Cambridge University. Called to the Bar from Lincoln's Inn, he was later a Fellow at Harvard Law School. He was elected Honorary Benchler and Master of Lincoln's Inn and Honorary Fellow, Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge. The University of Cambridge honoured him with the degree of Doctor of Law (Honoris Causa).

He became Member of the erstwhile Bhopal Legislative Assembly from 1952-56 and went on to hold office as the youngest Chief Minister of that State. He again became member of the Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly from 1956-1971 and was Member of the State Cabinet in Madhya Pradesh for several years and held several portfolios.

Dr. Sharma became Member of the Fifth and the Seventh Lok Sabha. In 1972 he was elected President of the Indian National Congress. He then served as Minister for Communications between 1974-1977. He also served as Governor of Andhra Pradesh, Punjab and Maharashtra and then as Vice-President of India and Chairman of the Rajya Sabha from 3rd September 1987. He was elected to the highest office of the President of the Indian Republic in July, 1992.

He authored several books and edited several prestigious publications such as the Lucknow Law Journal (1941-43) and Socialist India (1971-74).

This veteran freedom fighter, noted Gandhian, erudite scholar, distinguished parliamentarian and able administrator devoted his life to the service of the nation, presiding over the destiny of the nation at a very crucial time in its history.

Theme : Presidents, Freedom Fighters.

The Bulletin No.2. of Indepex - Asiana 2000 has been issued in 2nd week of September this year. This well produced, volume, lists the mandatory Organizing Committee and other Sub-committees, Commissioners, Juries, show programmes, Special Stamp issues to promote the show, the floor plan of the venue, and travel related informations. However, the highlight of this publication is a 19 pages long highly illustrated article by Sri. Ashok Kumar Bayanwala on "Postal History of Calcutta - 1854 - 1947". Mr. Bayanwala is a well known philatelic scholar and author and as well as a recognised authority on the Postal History of Calcutta. (First part of the article appears in this issue)

India has an interesting postal history and there is enough philatelic material available for a philatelist to make it a speciality.

The early postal history of India can be divided into two periods-pre-1837 and post-1837, when the Post Office Act was passed.

The famous historian Ziauddin Bahani has described in his records that the horse and the footrunner were in existence for means of communication from way back in the 13th century in India. Horses were used for speedy delivery in certain parts of the country but it was really the footrunner who was the mainstay. The footrunner is called "Harkara" in ancient books but for our purposes he is the postal runner or dak runner. In Tamil Nadu the runners were called "Pattamars". The runner carried a cleft stick; the small bag with the mail was held in this cleft. When travelling at night, he lit resinous twigs to guide him on his way.

These postal runners had to face a lot of hardship and danger, travelling through forests with wild animals, crossing swollen rivers during monsoons and trekking across snowcapped regions. The stick and a spear could hardly afford any protection. In spite of all these odds, they kept running and delivered the mail. They were a hardy race of people, honest, with a great sense of duty. Even today the Postal Department has to use runners in some parts of the country like Badrinath during the pilgrim season and also to the Gilgit and Leh snowbound areas. Wheeled traffic can operate only upto a point, thereafter the runners take over and deliver the mail to its destination.

The Mughal Emperors Babar and Akbar, tried to improve the postal service. Babar helped to organize a horse courier system from Agra to Kabul. Akbar introduced camels for carrying mail to the desert regions.

Once the East India Company was formed and received the Royal Charter, in the interest of trade with India, they had to develop a more organized system of communication. They organized postal runners on regular routes, setting stages of handing over. By 1688, the Company asked its Bombay and Madras offices to build a post office each and directed that all mail should be brought to the post office first. Lord Clive introduced the system of sorting mail into different bags according to destination. These bags had to be sealed with the Company seal and only the chiefs at different places could open it.

When Warren Hastings took over in 1774, he introduced further reforms. Postal rates depended on weight and distance. Handstruck Bishop Marks were applied on letters at Calcutta. These are known as the Indian Bishop Marks and they differ from the foreign Bishop Marks in that the months are printed in three letters, such as JAN, FEB, and so on, whereas the foreign ones have the months in two letters. The three Presidencies of Bombay, Madras and Calcutta used different handstruck stamps.

After the East India Company had established itself, they decided on major changes in the postal system. The Post Office Act of 1837 was passed which combined the presidencies and declared all private posts illegal. Even so, they continued to function in many parts of the country for some time.

A parcel post service called Bhangies, for delivery of bulky

parcels was established. Its rates were cheaper than that for ordinary mail.

The Company's letters were carried by merchant ships to England. It used to take almost a year to get a reply to a letter from Calcutta. Mail from India was transported to Marseilles in France and then on horseback to Calais where a steamboat then took it to Dover. It was once again carried on horseback to London. Gradually the time taken was reduced with the formation of the "Overland Route", in which mail was transported across land at certain points carried over water, instead of relying exclusively on ships and steamers.

The first Indian stamps, known as the Scinde Dawks, were issued by the Commissioner of Sind, Sir Bartle Frere, who was an admirer of Sir Rowland Hill, in 1852. He authorized the use of half-anna stamps in his district. Every collector should know something about the Scinde Dawks.

These stamps were first introduced as red on vermilion wafers but there were soon discarded. A new issue came out in July 1852, embossed in white, which was later changed to a bluish wave, unevenly spaced on sheets of three inches by six inches.

Sir Bartle Frere was not satisfied with the local printing, so he sent the design to his friends in England, and asked them to print the stamps in blue. In 1852, the Postmaster General of Karachi received 10,000 stamps. This order was repeated till almost 50,000 of them were in circulation, when Sir Bartle Frere withdrew them on the release of the all India Postage stamp. There is a theory that the Scinde Dawks were not adhesive stamps but simple wax seals, used as a trial at a post office in Karachi.

In the eyes of the Indian stamps collector, the best loved and desirable of early Indian stamps are those issued between 1852 and 1870. These are called 'Classics'. The Indian Classics comprise the first three series of stamps known respectively as the Scinde Dawks, the East India Company and Crown Colony Stamps.

The Court of Directors of the East India Company were keen that stamps should be printed in India. Col. Forbes was put in charge but he was not successful and gave it up. Then Capt. H.L. Thuillier, Deputy Surveyor General of the Survey Office, Calcutta, was asked to undertake it. After some trial and error and experiments, stamps in the denomination of one anna and four annas were released. Capt. Thuillier's essays are valuable.

From 1855 to 1926, stamps were printed in England by M/s. De La Rue and Co., and the inscription on the stamps in the beginning was East India Postage. In 1877, when Queen Victoria assumed the title of Empress of India, the inscription was changed to India Postage. A new printing press was established in Nasik and all stamps since 1926 have been printed there.

After the Indian empire was consolidated by the British, the centrally issued stamps were valid throughout the country, but the native Maharajahs also issued stamps which were valid only in their territories. Some of them overprinted the name of their States on the centrally issued stamps. After Independence and amalgamation of the Indian States into the Republic of India, these stamps were no longer valid; they are now collector's items.

The value of a stamp depends upon scarcity and demand. Between unused copies of a mint stamp and used copies of a stamp, the value depends on the relative availability. A stamp which has been issued a long time ago is more valuable if unused. In the case of the Scinde Dawks, there is only one unused, uncanceled stamp, which is in the British Royal Collection.

(Courtesy : Souvenir, Tanapex 2000)

GANDHI SERVICE

S.P. Chatterjee, FRPS, L



As early as January 1948 the Government of India decided to bring out a set of two stamps to pay its homage to the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi on his 80th birth anniversary on 2nd October 1949. Postal Department lost no time to arrange designing the stamps in collaboration with the Nasik Security Press depicting the important events of Gandhi's life. The Master, India Security Press sent his suggestions for a compact set of 4 stamps in the denominations of 1½ As, 3½As, 8 As and Re.1 He also sent two trial copies from the line sketch of Gandhi as readily available in the press.

While these preparations were in the process, the tragic assassination of Mahatma Gandhi on the 30th January 1948 changed the whole concept. The need of issuing at least a set of 2 mourning stamps immediately was strongly felt. It was therefore decided to bring out 2 stamps in the denominations of 2½ As for the Inland Air Mail and 12 As for Air Mail to UK on the 12th March 1948 i.e. a month after the immersion of his ashes in the sacred river; based on a sketch submitted by C. Biswas an Indian artist and approved by the Department. Press sent the proofs on Feb. 17. As Mahatma Gandhi was 'Bapu' to the populace, the Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru suggested the word 'Bapu' to be added both in Hindi and Urdu on the design. This was the only occasion that Urdu appeared on an Indian Postage Stamp.

Government however simultaneously carried on negotiations with the Austrian State Printing Press, Vienna as well as with the Swiss Printers Helio Courvoisier with a view to have these memorial stamps printed by the most updated printing process of photogravure which was not available in the Nasik Security Press at that time. Ultimately the Swiss firm got the orders for printing of 31.5 million stamps in 4 denominations. It was a pity that the memorial stamps of Gandhi, the exponent of Swadeshi movement in the Country had to be printed by a 'Videshi' press. The Government in its zeal to bring out the stamps of the Father of the Nation in the best of international printing process available took the recourse of printing them by the foreign press.

For designing the stamps two photographs were selected one from the 'Life' magazine and the other lent by Rajkumari Amrit Kaur but belonged to Kanu Gandhi, the grand son of Mahatma.

Helio Courvoisier sent about 39/40 colour trials. Government finally approved to print the lower denominations

Denomination	Colour	Quantity to be printed
1½ As	Sepia brown	25,000,000
3½ As	Bluish purple	2,500,000
12As	Dark green	3,750,000
Rs.10	Reddish brown	250,000
	Total	31,500,000

in the identical designs showing the full face of Gandhi and the Rs. 10 denomination in profile in the colours and quantities of each denomination as indicated above against each.

Original idea of bringing out these memorial stamps on the 12th March had to be abandoned and it was finally decided to release the stamps on the 15th August 1948 - the first anniversary of India's Independence as a fitting tribute in memory of Mahatma Gandhi. The stamps were sent from Geneva to Bombay by Air India International in consignments during the months of June & July '48. They were subsequently sent to the Nasik Security Press for distribution. The stamps were simultaneously released in Washington and London as well.

The Indians had however strong reservations for having these stamps printed in the foreign country and in such high denominations of 12 As and Rs. 10 which very few people in the country could use in their domestic correspondences. The majority of collectors also were deprived as they could hardly collect the full sets at that exorbitant price. But to some philatelists who could afford this was a boon as the value of the set went up and up every year. Another disservice was done by restricting the sale of these stamps for three months which however was extended by another 1 ½ month anticipating a demand of these stamps during the session of the Indian National Congress held at Jaipur during the month of December 1948. This meant the unsold stocks were withdrawn and destroyed in substantial quantities which not only resulted in great loss of foreign exchange but allowed the price of the reduced stock to shoot up in the philatelic market. Government however became wise and in future years never had the sale restricted on any commemorative stamp or the unsold stock destroyed (but allowed to be sold as ordinary stamp).

Later on, at the instance of some high ranking officials of the Government, some small quantities of the Gandhi stamps in all the four denominations were overprinted "SERVICE" at the Nasik Security Press for the exclusive use on the official mails of the Secretariat of the Governor General C. Rajagopalachari. The Government did not announce the date of overprinting or release of the stamps; the quantities overprinted; to whom supplied and other allied information which are normally supplied to the public. With the result the stamp catalogues like Stanley Gibbons have shown that overprinted stamps were also released in August 1948 and was silent about the name of the press which overprinted giving impression that they have also been overprinted by Helio Courvoisier. It is however observed that the then Philatelic officer T.N. Mehta (who was closely connected with the overprinting and release of these stamps) in his article on "The story of Gandhi Stamps" published in the American Philatelist magazine of August 1980 issue clearly mentioned:

"Later the same year (1948), some high ranking officials proposed that an extremely limited quantity of the Gandhi stamps be overprinted with the word "SERVICE". These were to be used on official mails emanated from the secretariat of the Governor General. The Postal Department believed that because the stamps were commemorative it would be against philatelic ethics to overprint them. But these observations were overruled and the required quantities overprinted. There never has been a case such as this when philatelic code was ignored and the will of the bureaucrats prevailed."

He however did not touch upon when the stamps were overprinted or the exact quantities printed and distributed.

The earliest information we get is in the article of C.N. Chandra published in the July 1951 issue of the Philatelic Journal of India wherein he mentioned that the overprinting was done by the Nasik Security Press and were brought into use on the 13th August 1949 and remained current upto 31st January 1950. In a later issue of the magazine the date of 13th August was corrected to be 15th August. He has also given the quantities supplied to the Governor General's secretariat as below:

Denomination	No. of stamps supplied	
Rs.10	20	
12 As	250	equivalent to 5 sheets
3½ As	1350	equivalent to 27 sheets
1½ As	15950	equivalent to 319 sheets

He also mentioned that a block of 4 of each of the denomination of these stamps were supplied to the Royal Collection in accordance to the past practice.

It seems peculiar that without referring to the source from which he received these figures particularly when the P & T Deptt. did not announce them, how could he give such figures. He was however silent about the quantities were distributed or utilised. I also observed that in absence of these particulars many of catalogues such as Bridger and Kay's KG VI Commonwealth catalogue took these figures as quantities overprinted instead of supplied to the Secretariat of Governor General. In Jal Cooper's priced catalogue of Indian stamps the same quantity was shown as supplied (without mentioning how

much printed) excepting that quantities of Rs. 10 supplied has been shown as 100 instead of 20. Robson Lowe's Encyclopedia Vol. III (Asia) the quantities overprinted were shown as 300 stamps of each of the Anna denominations and 100 of the Rs. 10 denomination. There was therefore a general confusion all around.

I was also confused with all these anomalies when I started working my second article on rare items in the National Philatelic Museum, Delhi after the publication of my first one on 'Inverted Head' which appeared in the Signet in July-Sept 1982 issue. To clarify all these points I was in constant correspondences with the Security Press, and the P & T Deptt at all levels of the Philatelic branch from Member (Post) to Director (Philately) during the year from January 1983, to October 1986 when all that I got relating to these overprinted stamps was a copy of the letter from General Manager Nasik Security Press to the address of Director Philately which was sent to me by him in September 1986. The letter inter alia stated that these overprinted stamps were first despatched to the PMG Bombay on 10.08.48 and that as regards quantity overprinted as "SERVICE" could not be furnished since the records have been destroyed long back. Why the first despatch was made to the PMG Bombay? Normally all stamps are despatched to the treasuries for supply to the Post Offices but may be as these stamps were meant to be

and overprinting of Gandhi stamps both in the operating and advising capacity. We can therefore take for granted the quantities supplied to the Secretariat of the Governor General as mentioned by C.N. Chandra in his article as correct in absence of any other information. Even D.J. Aggersberg, catalogue editor of Stanley Gibbons in reply to one of my enquires wrote to me on the 13th November 1986 - "I have examined my files on the subject (overprinting Gandhi Service stamps) which cover material used in compilation of the catalogue listings. Most of the details appear to be based on the article by C.N. Chandra published in the July 1951 issue of the Philatelic Journal of India."

As these stamps were exclusively over printed for the use in the Secretariat of the Governor General it can safely be assumed that no other offices in the Government were supplied. But I understand that there were general order to supply all stamps printed, reprinted or overprinted to the DG P & T, to the Royal collection and to keep 2 sheets in the Security Press for its records. No doubt these orders must have been complied with by the Security Press for the Gandhi Service overprinted stamps. Taking all these into accounts the minimum quantities of these stamps printed and supplied might be as in the chart below (apart from the quantities wasted and destroyed in printing)

Supplied to	Denominations							
	1 ½ anna		3½ anna		12 anna		Rs. 10	
	Sheet	Stamp	Sheet	Stamp	Sheet	Stamp	Sheet	Stamp
Secretariat of GG	319	-	27	-	5	-	-	20
DG P & T	1	5	1	5	1	5	1	5
Royal Collection	-	Block 4	-	Block 4	-	Block 4	-	Block 4
Security Press	2	Block 4	2	Block 4	2	Block 4	2	Block 4
Security Press (balance of the broken sheet)	-	37	-	37	-	37	-	17
Total Printed	323	-	31	-	9	-	4	-

used exclusively by the Secretariat of the Governor General they were routed through the PMG Bombay under special order of the DG P & T.

When I expressed my shock to the Director Philately that how can the records relating to the quantities of stamps printed could be destroyed in a Security Press when they are of a very permanent nature? There was no reply. I therefore further enquired of him to intimate at least the actual number of stamps (Gandhi Service) available at that time in each denomination both in the stock of DG, P & T and Nasik Security Press to keep two sheets of each variety of stamps, printed, reprinted or overprinted and their stock for records. The Director (Philately) promised to provide the information but did not inspite of repeated reminders. I could not therefore proceed further with my project.

On persistent request from D.N. Jatia and others, I am compelled to reopen the buried chapter to record my assessment of the Gandhi stamp overprinted "SERVICE" and its distribution.

The then Philatelic Officer T.N. Mehta and C.N. Chandra ICS were closely associated with the whole process of printing

It would be observed that blocks of 4 were supplied to the Royal Collection which I had confirmed from John Marriot the keeper in September 1986. The DG, P & T was supplied with a sheet (displayed in the Museum) one loose stamp and a block of 4 stamps and the Security Press kept for records 2 sheets and 2 blocks of 4 as usual. To supply these loose stamps and blocks of 4 the Security press had to break one full sheet. This account for 37 stamps in each lower denominations and 17 stamps in the Rs. 10 denomination shown lying with the supplier (unless some presented to the dignitaries.)

The then Philatelic Officer T.N. Mehta admitted in his reply to my query on the 9th July 1986 that a block of 4 of each denomination supplied to the DG P & T were presented to the high dignitaries like - one set to the then Minister of Communication, one to the DG P & T and one set to the Philatelic Officer and the fourth set was presented later on to the retiring Sr. D.D.G. C.V. Cunningham. He also mentioned that C.N. Chandra a close friend of the DG and a connoisseur of stamps could not resist the temptation of getting one set for his

collection, T.N. Mehta gave his one set to him with pleasure without any consideration.

Thus the total quantity of these stamps printed could be deduced as in table above.

Denomination	
1½ As	323 sheets equivalent to 16150 stamps.
3½ As	31 sheets equivalent to 1550 stamps.
12 As	9 sheets equivalent to 450 stamps.
& Rs. 10	4 sheets equivalent to 200 stamps.

It would be difficult to assess the quantities in circulation of the lower denominations but we may try to attempt for the Rs. 10 denomination. Of this 200 numbers of stamps of Rs. 10 denomination printed as shown above those lying in the stocks of the DG P & T and Security Press, it can safely be presumed, that they cannot be in circulation. This leaves us with 20 stamps supplied to the Secretariat and 4 stamps presented from the DG P & T's office. These 24 stamps of Rs. 10 denomination may be in circulation. With the soaring of the price of this denomination from \$ 150 in 1964 to \$ 10,000 in 1997 more and more Philatelists will vie with each other to possess the same in their collections.

Of these 24 stamps we have not come across any used copies but a block of 4 in mint came out for sale as A.M. Leverton of Temple Bar Auction Ltd in his letter of 14th October 1986 informed me that a block of 4 of the 10R original had come to them from a Government Official which were since broken into 4 singles and sold. We have also come across from the India Study Circle's News Bulletin of March 1955 that V.E. Simms purchased a full set of these Gandhi Service Stamps and subsequently sold them to J.D. Moss. It would be very difficult to account for how many of these 24 stamps are really in possession with the collectors. In the International Stamp Exhibition held in Delhi 1989 - INDIA 89 the following collectors have however shown one copy of Rs. 10 denomination of Gandhi Service Stamp in their collections on Gandhi.

1. Dr. Reuben A Ramkissoon of USA.
2. Pradip Agarwal of Patna.
3. Dilip Shah of Jabalpur.
4. Eruch E. Mehta of Pune.
5. Alok Mathur of Gaziabad.
6. Dr. Rajendra K. Agarwal of Patna.
7. Dr. Surendra P. Gupta of Meerut.
8. A. Hussain Kidwai of Bhopal.

Words were going round at that time that a copy of Rs. 10 denomination is also in possession of S.B. Kothari of Calcutta, Dr. Sita Bhateja of Bangalore, P. Gupta of Calcutta, Madhukar Jhaveri of Bombay, B.M. Jalan of Patna, Krishna Prasad of Gaziabad, B.K. Birla of Calcutta. Many of them have changed hands and some more have come in circulation now.

Some confusion still remains about the date of release of these "SERVICE" stamps. Only information I got from Nasik Security Press through the Director (Philately) was that the first despatch was made to the PMG Bombay on 10.08.48. Jal Cooper also got the same date as mentioned by him in India Stamp Journal of October 1948. It was therefore certain that

these overprinted stamps were also released on the 15th August 1948 along with other Gandhi Stamps. He also mentioned in his magazine that some genuinely officially used Service Stamps on covers in 1948 had been handled by him. With this available information and the fact that the overprint service stamps were despatched by the Security Press on the 10th August 1948 it was very improbable to wait for the release of these stamps. It feel that the stamps were released 15th August 1948 instead of 15th 1949 as mentioned by C.N. Chandra.

Even though forgeries did appear in overprinted "SERVICE" stamps, I doubt the Rs. 10 denomination forgery circulation as there would be had Philatelist who would purchase this at such a high price without obta certificate from an Expertising Cor Forgeries may be available in the denominations of Anna Series.

(Courtesy : Signet 1997)

POSTAL HISTORY OF CALCUTTA (1854 - 1947)

Ashok Bayanwala

Even today the narrow lanes, the hustle - bustle of Chowranghee streets, the friendly faces and above all the very air and the smell of its soil still haunts me, though I left Calcutta some 30 years back for good. In my opinion, Calcutta is above Love and Passion; it is an Addiction. So no matter where the Calcuttans go, the city stays alive in their hearts as long as they live.

Calcutta has a very interesting history. This mystic city rose in 1690 by joining three villages namely Sutanati (on the site of modern Shyam Bazar & Upper Chitpur Road), Kalikata (on the site of modern Bow Bazar) and Govindpur (on the site of modern Fort William and Race Course.) Actually, it was a relatively empty region, in the neighbourhood of or within jungles and marshes, but stood on an ideal communication line with a vast North & East Indian hinterland. Therefore, slowly jungles and marshes gave way to palatial buildings, and with the political changes in mid-eighteenth century, Calcutta became a metropolis.

Modern Calcutta owes its origin to Lord Wellesley's interest in the city's development. In 1803, the Governor General desired that Calcutta must be designed to be the Queen of the East. Accordingly, the town improvement committee was formed, and slowly Calcutta grew as the most magnificent city of the East. The changes in Calcutta can be imagined by the following table:

YEAR	AREA	RESIDENTIAL	FOREST OR BARREN	AGRICULTURE	POPULATION
1706	6 km	16.61%	28.19	40.13	12,000 (approx)
1850	20km	63.92%	20.16	NIL	4,00,000 "
1912	53km	41.72%	26.84	NIL	8,00,000 "
1947	104km	61.65%	7.84	NIL	27,00,000 "

Calcutta, being the Imperial Capital of the British Empire (1774 - 1912), provided a galaxy of cancellations and that too with variations. A few rare cancellations were exclusively used by Calcutta GPO. This article is based on my study of published and unpublished Postal History Literature and Documents of

Postal Department. Last but not the least, it is based on my Exhibit of Calcutta (1800 to 1900) and (1901 to 1947). The article deals with different Postal Services of Calcutta, both domestic and international.

I am thankful to Sri Vinay Manani of Ahmedabad, a freelance artist, who has helped me to sketch all examples of Postal Marks, used in this article.

HISTORY OF GPO

The present handsome building of General Post Office of Calcutta is situated on the west side of the Old Fort William. The 6,30,000 rupees building, consists of two lofty storeys, the east and south fronts being faced with tall Corinthian columns flanked by massive piers in which are the staircases. The South - East angle of the building is semicircular, also faced with Corinthian columns leading to a lofty circular hall in which are the public counters. This is surmounted by a lantern crowned by a dome, which forms a conspicuous object in the city of Calcutta.

The G.P.O. was erected in 1864, from the design of Alter B. Granville, the architect to the Govt. of India. It was opened to the public in 1868.

The GPO was removed at least twelve times to various locations, during the years 1774 to 1868. The GPO of Calcutta was opened at Fort William. When commercial necessity increased due to large number of private correspondence, the GPO was shifted to the house at the south western corner of the burying ground in 1785. The site is now at the corner of Hastings Street and Church Lane and occupied by a private petrol pump. It remained there till 1800 and afterwards it was housed with Fort area. In 1823, it was shifted to 13, Chowringhee Road. The View Card series published by Historical Society of Calcutta in 1838 also reveals that the GPO was on the mouth of present Sudder Street near Indian Museum, where it intersects with Chowringhee Road. The GPO was located atleast three times at this address. In 1833, the Govt. of Bengal authorised the PMG to hire premises during repair of GPO. The list of Govt. buildings occupied as public buildings, issued by the collector on 28-7-1841 for assessment of tax shows that GPO was located at 1, Bankshall street. In 1844, the PMG represented to the Govt. that the GPO building was unsuitable for existing requirements and it also wanted repairs, so an entirely new building should be constructed. The Court took 6 years to forward the plan and elevation of the GPO to London. The GPO was shifted to Mangoe Lane in 1852 for two months, during the repairs of GPO buildings. The street Directory of Calcutta for 1855 shows that Calcutta GPO was housed in 10 Hare Street, where Bankshall street intersects. The building was one storeyed, low roofed, having a godownish appearance, from where the first Postage stamp of India was issued to the public for sale on 20th September 1854. It appears the GPO remained here till it was shifted to the new building in 1868, though the then present building did not afford sufficient accomodation for the proper working of the several departments of the Post Office. A pacca shed was constructed in 1856-57 for Post Office carriages and Despatch and Receiving rooms were enlarged in 1857-58. Two more rooms were given to GPO in 1860, but it did not serve the purpose. The construction of the new building has a long story form 1864 to 1868. The Imperial Govt. made all possible efforts and reasonable expenditure for "One of such architectural exterior as to ornament the capital of India". The building has a floor area of 48,148 Sq. ft. with its magnificent dome with height of 220 ft.

DEVELOPMENT OF POST OFFICES IN AND AROUND CALCUTTA

Calcutta GPO has the distinction of opening of Postal Services to public on and from 1st April 1774, which was hitherto not used by them. Gradually the work load at GPO increased and it became troublesome for general public to post mail at GPO. Therefore, in 1808, 4 "One Anna Post Offices" were established in Calcutta, where all letters would be received for deliverable at a distance not exceeding seven miles. (11.61) from the boundaries of Calcutta. It also meant that one anna would be charged extra on and above inland postage for other places as letters had to be sent to GPO for further transmission from these One Anna Post Offices. The exact location of these four "One Anna Post Office" is not yet known. but one of them was in the premises of Rozario & Co. in 1830. These One Anna P.O. were replaced by DAK Chowkeyes. It is recorded by Mr. D. Hammond Giles that Dak Chowkey No. 1 was situated at Badam Tallah and No. 2 was at Jorasanko during 1833 to 1837. The Post Office Act No. XVII of 1837, introduced uniform postage in all Presidencies based on polymetrical distance. The extra charge levied by One Anna PO / Dak Chowkey for transmission of mail to GPO was abolished, and the existing One Anna PO / Dak Chowkey were replaced by Receiving Houses, which were setup in a way to cover the entire territory of Calcutta. Six Receiving Houses were recorded in 1837 which are as follows:

R.H.No. 1 Located at Camac Street (Park Street) South Central.

R.H.No. 2 Located at Machoa Bazar (Jora Sanko) North Central

R.H.No.3 Located at Bagh Bazar in No.th

R.H.No.4 Located at Bhowanipore in South

R.H.No.5 Located at Kidderpore in South West

R.H.No.6 Located at Bytok Khanna (Bow Bazar) in East.

Postage stamps were introduced vide Post Office Act no. XVII of 1854. Uniform postage irrespective of distance was introduced. Half anna was fixed for letters and a quarter anna was for a post card. After 1854, the Receiving Houses of Calcutta were re-organised and renumbered, which are as follows:

R.H. No. 1 Wellesly Street, Corner of Royd Street.

R.H. No.2 Jora Sanko

R.H. No.3 Bagh Bazar

R.H. No.4 Bhowanipore

R.H.No.5 Kidderpore

R.H.No.6 Bow Bazar

R.H.No.7 Napith Bazar (End of Dharmatallah Street)

R.H.No.8 Loudon Street

R.H.No.9 Cornwallis Square (Simla Street) facing

Manik tollah street

R.H.No.10 Haut Khola

The year 1867 saw another major change, when these Receiving Houses were upgraded and were made Post Offices, which are as follows:

1. N - North - Baugh Bazar
2. NE - North East - Simla Street
3. NW - North West - Haut Khola
4. NC - North Central - Jorasanko.
5. C - Central - Bow Bazar
6. EC - East Central - Napith Bazar
7. WC - West Central -
8. SC - South Central - Wellesly Street

- 9. S - South - Loudon Street
- 10. SE - South East - Bhowanipore
- 11. SW - South West - Kidderpore

The post marks of urban post offices were changed at least 10 times during 1867 to 1883. Alphabetic codes or numerical codes were used with or without post office names. In 1883 these codes were abolished and only name of P.O. appeared in post marks.

With passing of times, many new post offices were opened in Calcutta and a few were closed. By 1947, more than 100 P.O.s were working in the city.

DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION LINES

By 1854, Calcutta was well connected with all major towns and areas of India, by road. The important roads connecting Calcutta with other towns are as follows:

1. Grand Trunk Road (Delhi Route) - Calcutta - Burdwan - Ranigunge - Sasaram - Benaras.
2. Madras Trunk Road (Madras Route) - Calcutta - Midnapore - Jelasore - Balasore - Bhadrak - Cuttack - Ganjam.
3. Sambalpur Trunk Road (Bombay Route) - Calcutta - Midnapore - Keonjhar - Sambalpur.
4. Darjeeling Trunk Road - Calcutta - Berhampore - Bhagwangola - Golagari - Dinajpore - Siliguri - Darjeeling.
5. Jessore Road - Calcutta - Borgooan - Jessore - Faridpur - Dacca - Commilla - Chittagong.
6. Diamond Harbour Road - Calcutta - Diamond Harbour.
7. Berhampur Trunk Road - Calcutta - Berhampore - Murshidabad.

There was a very good network of feeder roads in and around the above noted routes. Thus mail used to go via these roads before advent of Railways and Aeroplanes. Regarding inland waterways, Calcutta was situated on the banks of River Hooghly, a distributory of Ganga which remains navigable throughout the year. The distance between Calcutta and Allahabad is 1280 Kms by water route. Boats (downstream) used to take 40 to 60 days in dry season and 20 days during rainy season. The journey upstream was difficult and used to take three to four months. Steamers were introduced in March 1944. The up journey was completed in 24 days and down journey took 12 days only. This water route was used to carry Bhanghy Mail and heavy mail, till Railway network was established after 1853.

Calcutta was the main outlet for Assam and Eastern part of Bengal. The communication and trade of Assam was mainly carried by Brahmaputra and that of East Bengal by Meghna river. Chandpur was the main steamer point where boats coming from Ganga, Brahmaputra and Meghna used to stop. From Chandpur the route to Calcutta was very close to sea face and then into Hoogly by Baratala Creek. But the route was dangerous because sea remains rough & violent for nearly 8 months a year. So in 1777, the route via Tolly's Naullah was opened. From Chandpur, the route was via Barisal, Khoolna, Bidyadhari river and Tolly's Naullah, to Calcutta.

For international communication and mail Calcutta was well connected by Sea Route. Calcutta was the main port of Bay of Bengal (eastern side of India). All vessels coming or going, had to touch Calcutta. There were regular services through Calcutta in Indian sub-continent, besides long distance Steamer Services.

Letters posted from Calcutta for overseas, would normally

be marked with ship's name by which letters should be conveyed. If the writer was too late to catch the ship before it sailed, the mail could be sent by runners in an "After Packet" conveyance to catch the ship at Diamond Harbour, Kedgerree or New Anchorage at a flat rate of eight annas.

Postage on all Europe ship letters from Calcutta was 2 annas per 1 sicca weight in the eighteenth century. Postage changed from time to time. In 1834, the steam postage to United Kingdom via Suez, was Re. One per sicca weight.

The incoming mails for Bengal Presidency were off loaded at Kedgerree and then sent to Calcutta either by dawk runner, horse or dawk boats to enable a speedy delivery. No extra postage was charged for such delivery till Calcutta.

Railways were introduced in India (Bombay) on 16-8-1853 and the first passenger train with mail, steamed out from Calcutta on 15-8-1854. As Calcutta was the hub of British activities, Railway lines were laid first, to connect Calcutta with all major cities of India. Calcutta was connected with Delhi on 15-8-1865 via Allahabad, with Siliguri by June 1878, with Madras via Waltair on 14-12-1900 and with Gauhati by April 1909. Thus Calcutta was connected to all major cities of India, by the beginning of the Twentieth Century.

First Official Air Mail was carried in India on 18-2-1911, from Allahabad to Naini. Since then many experimental flights were undertaken and Calcutta was one of the main centres of such activities. Calcutta was connected with Karachi via Jodhpur, Delhi, Cawnpore, Allahabad & Asansol by regular flights on and from 7-7-1933. Calcutta was connected with Rangoon and with Dacca by 1-12-1933 and by 11-12-1933 with Singapore. Madras was connected on 10-2-1934 via Bezwada, Vishakhapatnam and Puri. Bombay was connected via Nagpur and Tatanagar on 25-2-1935. England was connected with Australia via Calcutta in December 1934. Thus Calcutta was connected with all airmail cities of the world. Calcutta was the only airport in India for East bound airplanes.

The first General Post Office in India, to give Postal Services to public, was opened on and from 1st April 1774, at Governor's House at Calcutta. Under the Bye Rules No. 8 of 1774, all mail were ordered to be stamped. William Redford, the then Post Master General of Calcutta GPO introduced the Bishop Mark - the first ever Indian Post Mark. It was used only from Calcutta.

(To be continued)

(Courtesy - Bulletin Asiana 2000)

EUROPA STAMP

Rene Bracher, Ostermundigen



EUROPA stamps are of course linked to Europe but were not invented by the present European Union and did not herald the advent of the . The first joint stamp was issued in 1956 by the members states of the European Coal and Steel Community - Belgium, France, Italy, the Federal Republic of Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Although it was not a member

of this Community, Switzerland surprisingly enough participated in the issue in 1957 and again in 1959 with its own Europa designs.

After the foundation in 1959 of the European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT), an association of 23 European PTT administrations (including Switzerland), a recommendation was made as early as 1960 that member countries should issue a Europa stamp every year as a testimonial to their joint efforts.

Prior to 1973, graphic, more or less symbolic motifs (flowers, keys, emblems, etc.) were used to represent the joint EUROPA objective.

1974 brought the end of the single motif, which was written off by some as "boring", and the specification of themes, such as national heritage, landscapes, folk customs or leading figures, etc. This approach successfully combined unity with variety and gave the collection of these stamps fresh impetus. At that time, the EUROPA stamp was characterized by the different typefaces used for the word "EUROPA" and the copyright CEPT logo.

In the Nineties, another new development emerged, with the growing separation and, in some cases, privatization of Post and Telecoms in more and more CEPT countries. A follow-up-organization called "POSTEUROP" (the Association of European Public Postal Operators) with a total of 42 members - not all of them EU countries - now deals with cross-border postal issues, including the issue of the traditional EUROPA stamps. The specification of a common theme has been retained but, from 1993, the stamps have featured a EUROPA typeface designed by Swiss artist Stephan Bundi, instead of the CEPT logo.

The year 2000 is the occasion of a "genuine" joint issue for the first time since 1984. All POSTEUROP members were invited to submit a draft on the broad topic of "Europa 2000", but the individual countries were left to select their own design procedures. Due to lack of time, Switzerland had to forgo the competition usually held in such cases and instead commissioned Arnold Wittmer, from Gunzwil, to prepare the appropriate draft. At its 1997 meeting in Malta, the POSTEUROP "Stamps and Philately" Committee responsible for shortlisting the entries finally submitted a choice of three drafts to the plenary after a long and laborious process. The delegates chose the French draft as the joint EUROPA 2000 stamp, closely followed by the Swiss and Belgian entries (see illustrations). However, as for previous issues, there is (as yet) no standard stamp which is valid throughout Europe but instead a variety of issues featuring the same motif, adapted as appropriate to the specifications of the individual country.

FIP OVERTURNS THE JURY AT THE LONDON SHOW

In the world of the stamp collector who exhibits internationally, there is only one Valhallai, the internationally, there is only one Valhalla; the international stamp exhibition. Held by major nations only once each decade, it is there that the elite exhibitors strut their stuff.

Juries for these international events are made up of philatelists accredited by the International Federation of Philately (FIP).

As a FIP accredited judge, I can vouch that the job of

judging an international is extremely difficult because of the high level of exhibits.

And as an international gold-medal winner, I can say that the competition for top awards is also extremely intense. Please bear both these observations in mind as you read further.

The 10-year event for Great Britain was the Stamp Show 2000, held May 22-28 in London.

Collectors from around the world took or sent their treasured exhibits to be displayed and judged there, if they made the initial cut. One of the three best awards presented at the exhibition is called the grand prix national.

An American exhibitor, Patricia Stilwell Walker, took this award, but the prize did not come easily.

Initially, the jury had decided to give the grand prix national to another exhibitor, Pichai Buranasombati of Thailand.

But the panel's decision was overturned by the board of directors of the FIP at the very last minute and in a most unusual fashion.

Buranasombati's exhibit covers the early line-engraved issues of Great Britain. Walker's exhibit features Irish postal history from 1661 to the 1890s. Both deservedly qualified for the grand prix national. There is no question about that decision.

This is where it gets strange.

As members of the jury were being bused to the banquet hall for the awards dinner and presentation ceremony, they were told that a special session of the jury would be held before the dinner.

It was at the specially called session that Knud Mohr, president of the FIP and honorary chairman of the jury, announced that Buranasombati's exhibit had been disqualified from receiving the grand prix national.

The FIP board found that one of the stamps in his exhibit had been repaired, a circumstance that the jury had overlooked.

Complying with FIP regulations, Buranasombati had mounted a certificate on the back of the exhibit page that noted the repair.

But neither the jury, the FIP expert committee nor the large-gold review committee asked to see the certificate or questioned the authenticity of the stamp.

Tipped off about the repaired stamp, members of the FIP board opened the frame and examined the certificate. It stated that a margin had been added to the stamp in question.

At the presentation ceremony, Buranasombati was awarded a large-gold medal with special prize.

A member of the jury told me that the exhibit probably would not have received a large gold if the jury section that judged Buranasombati had bothered to look at the certificate.

However, when a juror sees that a certificate accompanies an exhibit page, he usually takes it to mean that the stamp is genuine in all respects.

For that reason, I suspect the jurors decided not to look at the certificate.

How did the FIP board learn that the stamp had been repaired?

Another exhibitor who received a large gold told Mohr and reportedly threatened legal action against the FIP, the Stamp Show 2000 and the Royal Philatelic Society if the exhibit was not downgraded.

The individual who reported the repaired stamp had excellent material in his own exhibit, but members of the jury felt that he did not qualify for the top prize.

Some jury members were disturbed that the decision to change awards was made by the FIP board without consulting the panel.

However, time was short, and it was inconvenient to recall the jury to the exhibition hall to examine the stamp and the certificate.

In my opinion, the FIP leaders did the next best thing. The jury members should have seen the reference to the certificate when examining the exhibit and should have asked to look at it at that time.

This brings about an interesting scenario for future exhibitions.

Should an exhibitor or anyone who sees something wrong in a competitive exhibit advise members of the jury or FIP board members?

I don't see anything wrong with that.

INDEPEX - ASIANA 2000



Exchange of contract documents for Asiana-2000. From left: Mr. Surajit Gongvatana, F I A P co-ordinator; Shri M.G. Pittie, President, PCI; Smt. Madhu Narayanan, DDG (Phil), Dept. of Posts, Govt. of India.

The Indepex Asiana-2000 is now firmly in its place. Mr. Surajit Gongvatana, F.I.A.P. Coordinator for INDEPEX ASIANA - 2000, visited Calcutta and reviewed the INDEPEX ASIANA-2000 site i.e. Netaji Indoor Stadium and the comprehensive safety arrangements. He proceeded to New Delhi where the contract for organising the exhibition was signed between the Department of Posts, Federation Inter-Asian Philately and the Philatelic Congress of India on 5.6.2000.

POSTAL STATIONARY - NEW ISSUES

i) A new product "GREETING POST" has been launched by Department of Posts and released by Mr. Ram Vilas Paswan, India's Minister for Communications, in a function organised at India Post's Head Quarters "Dak Bhavan" on 6th September 2000 at New Delhi.

Greeting Post comprises of a card with envelope with a Rs.3/- pre-printed postage stamp with stimulated perforation upon the envelope. The stamp is a miniature replica of the design

that appears upon the card. There are 34 different colourful designed Greeting Post out of 32 are issued for the forthcoming "Diwali" festival. There are two types of cards,

Small size card 10.5 cm x 16.5 cm of Rs.12/-
Large size card 12.0 cm x 18.5 cm of Rs.15/-
(inclusive of postage charges)

Besides giving the name of the designer and printer, each design is code numbered on the back side and carries the logo of India Post. The printers, Calcutta Security Printers - Kanpur and Madras Security Printers - Chennai, printed the Greeting Cards numbered 0001 to 0022 and 0023 to 0034 respectively. The card number 002 and 008 are withheld and shall be issued later. The code number is given in the following (small) follows. The last 2 digits are the year of issue. No special first day of issue postmark was provided on 6th September 2000 and regular date stamp of Philatelic Bureau was issued.

The envelope is also printed on the reverse with logo of India Post having inscribed words "GREETINGS" in English and Hindi both in medium size of round seal.

The Greeting Cards carry either "Happy Diwali" (26) or "Seasons Greetings" (6) in Hindi and English.

ii) The Department of Posts has also released 3 kind of new postal stationeries with advertisement message in bilingual with the logo of "Indepex Asiana-2000). And it is found for the first time on Registration Envelopes. They are as under:

A) 25 p Post Card , B) Rs. 17.50 Registration Envelope and C) Rs.8.50 Aerogramme.

iii) India Post has issued a commemorative Inland Letter Card (ILC) on the 50th Anniversary of the introduction of the Inland Letter Card on 2nd October 2000. India Post apply featured Mahatma Gandhiji on the stamp area of the issue. The said ILC carried the inscription "50th YEARS INLAND LETTER CARD - 2.10.1950 - 2.10.2000". This issue is printed by both MSP - Chennai and CSP - Kanpur. This is the first time that a commemorative issue of ILC has carried an advertisement.

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