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Some New Year Philatelic Resolutions

I thought this might be a very good time to review a listing of a stamp collector's possible New Year's resolutions. I'm not sure too many of us take the time to make New Year's resolutions, so think as my New Year gift to you; a no-hard-work-for-you-to-think-of set of stamp collecting resolutions for the New Year of 2002.

Obviously, you don't have to choose all of these listed here, but I hope you will enjoy reading the list, find it helpful and actually adopt one or more as your own.

Here they are, with explanations about each one's importance:

1. I will set aside some special time on a regular basis to work on my stamp collection.

Explanation: In these difficult economic times with the stress of the world news each day, day to day pressures and activities sometimes overwhelm us. For more than a 100 years, one of the finest selling points of stamp collecting has been the marvelous ability of these little pieces of paper to magically carry us away from our everyday concerns. In 2002, now more than ever, stamp collecting is a rewarding and relaxing hobby. Pick a time, may be saturday evenings, sunday nights or whenever, but set aside some time that you know is dedicated to working and playing with your stamps. You will find guaranteed stamp time each week a rewarding thing to do.

2. I will handle all of my stamps and covers with care.

Explanation: This is actually more complicated than the simple promise seems. Many of us tend mishandle stamps innocently because we are in a hurry, because we don't have time to find the right tools or because we say to ourselves, "well, this is a cheap stamp, anyway." Promise never to handle mint stamps with your hands. Get in the habit of using tweezers whenever you handle stamps. In this way, you won't accidentally handle a stamp with your hands, and thereby damage it with moisture, bending, or tearing. Store all of your stamps and covers neatly, using proper storage methods. Never leave stamps and covers lying around, especially in the wet areas Always put all

stamps and covers safely away when you are finished working with them.

3. I will become active in my local stamp club.

Explanation: Many readers belong to local stamp clubs. Only a few attend meetings of the clubs on a regular basis and fewer take an active role in making things happen at the club. If you would like to find even greater enjoyment from your stamps in 2002, make a promise to yourself that this year you'll make some specific contribution to the club. Consider chairing a committee or holding an office. If that's not your speed, volunteer to present a program on your favourite collecting topic. Write something for the club newsletter. If you can't do this by yourself, call another member and do it together. Help strengthen your local stamp club in 2002.

4. I will start a fun collection to supplement my main collection.

Explanation: An exciting recent trend in our hobby has been the development of fun collections and fun exhibits. These involve using as much creativity and imagination as you have, and often creating your own stamps and covers.

Many collectors have taken to "fun in philately" by creating collections and exhibits of their own liking. Starting a fun collection of your choice is a relaxing and fun-filled challenge, and highlights the lighter side of stamp collecting.

5. I shall participate at an exhibition in 2002. Taking part in an exhibition is an education in itself. The preliminary planning, study and preparation will make you look at your collection with a new eye. Participation will also mean you having to study your subject in depth as well as the F.I.P. GREV and SREV Rules and Regulations and the basic principles of presentation. It will bring some discipline into your philatelic life. Moreover, the level of medal you win will let you know what your peers think of your effort. It will give you an opportunity to meet other collectors and dealers. Remember a journey of a 1000 miles starts with a single step. So do take part in an exhibition be it a school, college, society, city, state, national, international or world exhibition.

Wishing you all success in your philatelic endeavours in 2002. We meet again, till then - happy hunting!

- Editor.

Our Second Sunday Meetings were held regularly where 30 members attended with President Shri. Balakrishna Das presiding. Mr. Madan Mohan Das spoke on 'Youth Philately'.

JAGDEV PRASAD

05.09.2001

400

0.4 million



Jagdev Prasad (1922-1974) was a fearless leader from Bihar who fought for the cause of the backward and downtrodden sections of the society.

Hailing from a humble background, the young Jagdev had to undergo many hardships to pursue his studies. However, neither the financial difficulties nor the caste-based ostracism could deter him, and he went on to secure a Master's Degree in Economics from the Patna University in 1950.

The socialist ideology of Ram Manohar Lohia had a tremendous influence on Jagdev Prasad. He joined the Socialist Party and contributed his mite to fight social inequalities and economic exploitation, which continued to stain the social fabric of India, despite the attainment of freedom. He entered electoral politics in 1957 when Ram Manohar Lohia inspired him to contest from the Sasaram Lok Sabha Constituency. However, unaccustomed with the ways of contemporary politics, he lost the election.

In 1967, he contested for the 4th Bihar Assembly from Kurtha and emerged victorious. He played an important role in forming the first ever coalition government in Bihar with Mahamaya Prasad Singh as the Chief Minister. He also made a mark as the Minister in-charge of the Health portfolio in the Government. However, Jagdev Prasad soon realised that there was no honourable representation of the backward and downtrodden sections in the Government. His relentless struggle for the upliftment of the weaker sections was markedly distinct in the political milieu of his times. However, his stand was vindicated subsequently when the Union Government itself took note and appointed the Backward Classes Commission and later, implemented the recommendations contained in the commission's report.

Jagdev Prasad was also noted for his suave penmanship. His journalistic career started in 1953 with 'Janata', the organ of the Socialist Party. Later, he also edited the English weekly, 'Citizen' and the Hindi weekly, 'Juday'.

The life and political career of Jagdev Prasad had an unfortunate end in 1974, when he received a bullet shot in his neck in the confusion which arose out of the police firing at a rally in Kurtha, which he was addressing.

Theme : Personality, Journalist

RANI AVANTIBAI

19.09.2001

400

0.4 million

Rani Avantibai, Queen of Ramgarh State in central India, is remembered for her valiant fight against the British during the 1857 War of Independence.

The Revolt of 1857 which shook the British rule to its roots was the culmination of traditional opposition against the foreign domination of India which started with the Battle of Plassey of 1757. Millions of peasants, artisans and soldiers participated in the Revolt. The traditional ruling class consisting of the princes, zamindars, taluqdars and local chieftains who were natural leaders in the respective local contexts also played a central role in the uprising. The British officials, had resorted to numerous annexations of the Indian States and confiscations of the estates of the zamindars. These blatant annexations antagonised the local rulers and as the events of the Revolt of 1857 unfolded, they became the dangerous opponents of the British.



Avantibai was the Queen of King Vikramaditya Singh of Ramgarh. When Vikramaditya Singh became incapable of handling the affairs of the occasion she took charge of the administration.

In 1851, Avantibai felt humiliated by the appointment of an English Tehsildar for Ramgarh. The Rani could see through the annexationist ploy of the British and vowed to win back her country. However, before she could muster her resources for a struggle, she had to suffer a personal loss-the death of Vikramaditya Singh.

Meanwhile, resentment against the East India Company was growing and various kings and zamindars were uniting against the common enemy. When the Revolt of 1857 broke out, Rani Avantibai raised an army of four thousand and led it herself. In the first encounter which took place in a village named Kheri, she routed the British troops. However, stung by the defeat the British came back with vengeance and launched an attack on Ramgarh. The Rani was forced to leave Ramgarh and move to the dense forests on the hill of Devharigarh.

Surrounded and faced with the prospect of defeat Avantibai though it better to sacrifice her life rather than to surrender. On 20th March 1858, Rani Avantibai became a martyr.

Theme : Freedom Fighter, Women, Kings & Queens.

RAO TULA RAM

23.09.2001

400

0.4 million



Rao Tula Ram (1825-1863) of Rewari (presently in Haryana) was one of the important leaders of the First War of Independence of 1857, the great armed struggle against the British East Company's domination of India. The traditional ruler of a small state in the pargana of Rewari, Tula Ram, like many Indian

chieftains, held a grudge against the British for annexing much of the vast territory of his ancestors. When the Revolt of 1857 broke out in Meerut, the Rao sprung into action without wasting any time. He took control of the local administration in Rewari, displacing the official sowing allegiance to the British and proclaimed his rule, under the sanction of Emperor Bahadur Shah of Delhi, considered the titular head of India by the rebels of the Revolt.

Tula Ram had considerable insight into the dynamics of statecraft and was quick to realise that to be effective as a ruler and win the support of his subjects, it was essential to provide them security of life and property. He started by streamlining the Revenue Department and raising funds through effective collection of land revenue. With these funds, Tula Ram enlisted a force of about five thousand men, which was further organised systematically into different units of artillery, infantry, cavalry and police.

In the meantime, the British forces had regrouped and wrested back power from the rebels in most parts of the country including Delhi. After the fall of Delhi, the British officers diverted their attention to the nearby Rewari, leading to a series of confrontations. In the final conflict of Namaul in November 1857, the British emerged victorious, despite the gallant resistance put up by the forces of Tula Ram.

Rao Tula Ram moved into Rajasthan after the loss of Namaul, and held a series of discussions with the Rajput Princes, in the hope of forming a united front against the colonial power. However, the British supremacy had been firmly re-established by that time and no help was forthcoming. He is stated to have toured Iran and Afghanistan with this mission. Finally, the long journeys and the varying climates told on his health and he died in Kabul in September 1863.

Theme : Freedom Fighter, Kings & Queens

CHAUDHARY DEVI LAL

25.09.2001

400

0.4 million



Chaudhary Devi Lal (1914-2001), former Deputy Prime Minister of India, was a leader who will be remembered for his life-long championship of the cause of the farmers of the country.

Like many others of his generation, the Freedom Struggle inspired Devi Lal at a young age. He was only fifteen when he left studies

at the call of Mahatma Gandhi and became an active member of the Indian National Congress. He participated in the Civil Disobedience and Quit India Movements and was imprisoned several times. After the attainment of freedom, he played an important role in the political arena of Punjab, where he was elected to the Legislative assembly many times. After the formation of Haryana, the

fledgling State became his field of activity. He was elected Chief Minister of the State twice and his tenures saw the all-round development of Haryana, particularly the farm sector.

The late eighties saw Devi Lal emerging as a major force in the national political scene. He was Deputy Prime Minister of the country twice. Affectionately called 'Tau' (elder uncle) by the common people and titled 'King Maker' by the media, the real strength of Devi Lal was the support of the masses from the rural areas of North India. Even after crossing the age of seventy, he had the energy to traverse the villagers, thus striking a chord with them.

Resilience, struggle and action had marked Devi Lal's political career. He fought relentlessly to safeguard the interests of farmers, the downtrodden and weaker sections of the society and those who had no means for survival. He strove to enable them to earn respect in the society.

Theme : Freedom Struggle, Freedom Fighter.

SATIS CHANDRA SAMANTA

29.09.2001

400

0.4 million



A veteran freedom fighter and an immensely popular leader from West Bengal, Satis Chandra Samanta (1900-1983) lived a life of sacrifice and renunciation in the service of the country.

Courage, maturity and sympathy for the deprived were evident in Satis' character at a young age. He had to go through

the agony of losing his mother in his infancy, but was quick to come to terms with reality. Teachings of his Guru, Swami Pragnananda Warawati, with whom he came into contact at the age of fifteen, had a life-long influence on him. He was a second year student in the Shibpur Engineering College when he decided to forsake his studies in favour of working for the freedom of the motherland.

Satis Chandra Samanta started his public life through the activities organised by the Indian National Congress in his locality. He went on to become the President of the Tamluk Congress Committee and remained a dedicated Congress worker for many decades. His unlimited energy and leadership qualities proved to be a big asset in organising constructive work simultaneously with the activities of the freedom struggle.

Satis Chandra Samanta is remembered most for his leadership of the National Government called Tamralipta Jatiya Sarkar which was formed in Tamluk in the wake of the Quit India Movement. In the face of the atrocities unleashed by the British government, the people of Tamluk decided that for the removal of anarchy and to establish peace and order, it was essential to form their own Government. Satis Chandra Samanta was the automatic

choice to lead the Government and was virtually enthroned as the Sarbhadhinayak (Dictator) of the National Government. From the formation of National Government on 17 December 1942 till his arrest in June 1943, he oversaw its functioning, ensuring that the administration was discharged in an effective and fair manner.

In post-independence India, Satis Chandra Samanta was a Member of Parliament for almost three decades. He also made substantial contributions to numerous Parliamentary Committee as Member or Chairman.

Theme : Freedom Fighter, Freedom Struggle

SIVAJI GANESAN

01.10.2001

400

0.4 million



An iconic presence in Tamil cinema for five decades, Sivaji Ganesan (1928-2001) is one among the most charismatic film actors of all time.

Hailing from a middle class family of Villupuram in Tamil Nadu, the young Ganesan was fiercely independent even as a child. He left home at the age of six to pursue a

career in acting. Joining a theatre group, he went on to establish a good reputation as an actor. He was subsequently christened 'Sivaji' after his outstanding portrayal of the great Maratha warrior in the play Sivaji Kanda Hindu Rajyam.

Sivaji Ganesan made his debut into the film industry with Parasakthi, which was a huge success at the box office. He electrified the audience and cast a spell of magnetism over them, that was to last for many decades. A remarkable feature of his illustrious career spanning 301 films was that he played the protagonist in most of them. The sheer range of roles he handled is breathtaking. A majestic king from another era, a common man of today fighting heavy odds in an unfriendly world, a villain who personifies evil, the familiar romantic hero, an upright police officer, an octogenarian Shiva devotee and the awe-inspiring Lord Shiva himself - Sivaji had portrayed them all with unparalleled aplomb. Films like Veera Pandia Kattabomman, Kappalottiyá Thamizhan, Thiruvillaiyadal, Thillana Mohanambal, Thangapathakkam, Muthal Mariyadhai and Thevar Magan were land marks not just in his career, but in the Tamil film industry itself as well.

Sivaji Ganesan was also a philanthropist who took up numerous worthy causes and worked wholeheartedly for them. A diehard nationalist, he would rush to entertain and liven up the morale of the country's armed forces wherever the need arose. Some of his foreign tours were memorable, when he charmed the people of countries like the USA and Mauritius as a cultural ambassador par excellence. He also served as a Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) from 1983 to 1986. Many awards and

distinctions were conferred on this multifaceted personality, prominent among them being the Padma Bhushan (1984), Chevalier of Arts title of the French Government (1995) and the Dada Saheb Phalke Award (1996).

Theme : Entertainment, Theatre, Actors.

MAHATMA GANDHI: MAN OF THE MILLENNIUM

02.10.2001

400

0.4 million



The human race is unable to shed the spectre of strife and violence, even as it takes its first steps into the third millennium. Though the threat of wars between competing

nationalities has somewhat receded, the new sources of conflict like terrorism, sectarianism and fundamentalism are proving to be equally destructive, if not more. As violence is being propagated to counter violence, Mahatma Gandhi's humanism with its soothing and healing touch is sorely missed.

Mahatma Gandhi's major political goal and eventual achievement was to rid India of British rule through a campaign of non-violence. He worked up the moral sanctions through non-violent mass movements, which made the British realise the injustices of the colonial regime, and compelled them to quit India. The constructive programmes, which he devised to achieve this goal, were not mere political struggles - they also aimed to awaken India to social equality and economic self-reliance. A proud and grateful India acknowledges him as the Father of the Nation and looks up to his teachings for guidance at every hour of crisis.

Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy was based on an abiding faith in the underlying goodness of the human conscience. Even while opposing the immorality of the colonial system, he so loved the oppressors as to win them over. The success of his novel forms of peaceful struggle against the most powerful colonial regime of the world established him as one of the greatest leaders of the twentieth century. Gandhian principles played a part in inspiring similar movements throughout the world, removing dictators in countries as far apart as the Philippines and Poland and providing the inspiration for the likes of Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela.

To Mahatma Gandhi, truth was like religion. Political freedom of the country was not the end of his mission. His ideal was a society which consisted of self-regulated individuals, each performing his duty to others. Every member of this society would uphold moral values, follow truth and cultivate fearlessness.

Theme : Gandhi, Freedom Struggle, Indian History.

PERSONALITY SERIES : POETRY AND PERFORMING ARTS

Bharathidasan, Lachhu Maharaj and Master Mitrasen

9.10.2001

400, 400, 400 0.4 million Each



Bharathidasan (1891-1964) was one among the resuscitators of Tamil poetry in the twentieth century. Starting his life as a teacher of Tamil in Pondicherry, contact with his senior contemporary and mentor, Subramania Bharathi and Sri Aurobindo, drew Bharathidasan into the National Movement. He condemned casteism, communalism, male chauvinism and economic inequalities which stood in the way of India's struggle for freedom, through his works. He was imprisoned by the French Government in Pondicherry on the charge of treason. Later, Bharathidasan joined the Self Respect

Movement led by Periyar and used his poems as a vehicle for rationalistic ideas and known for the poetic intensity with which he expressed his reformist ideals.

Lachhu Maharaj (1901-1978) came from a family of illustrious Kathak exponents in Lucknow. He was fortunate to receive extensive training in Kathak from Pandit Bindadeen Maharaj, his uncle and the court dancer of the Nawab of Awadh, for nearly ten years. He also learnt the Pakhawaj, the Tabla and vocal music. He later moved to Bombay, where the emerging film industry helped him to establish his credentials as a modern master of Kathak. Lachhu Maharaj was acclaimed for the choreography of dance sequences in movies like Mahal, Mughal-e-Azam and Pakhiza as well as his ballets like Gautam Buddha, Chandravali A.Dand Bharatiya Kissan. He served as the founder Director of the Kathak Kendra started by the Uttar Pradesh Government in Lucknow. He also won many prestigious awards like the President's Award and the Sangeet Natak Academy Award.

Master Mitrasen (1895-1946) was a versatile artist who earned great fame as a poet, playwright, folk singer and short story writer. Hailing from Himachal Pradesh, he joined the armed forces at an early age. After his discharge from the army in 1918, he took up various creative pursuits like classical music and theatre. He raised the "Himalaya Theatre Company" in 1926. He travelled widely in India and Nepal, addressing the Gorkha community and striving to raise them to a higher moral and cultural plane. The self respect and patriotism which he infused into the community is seen to be believed in Malaya where large number of Gorkhas joined the Indian National Army during the Second World war.

Theme : Personality, Arts

STORIES FROM PANCHATANTRA

17.10.2001

400,400,400,400,400,400,400 3 million each

The Panchatantra is an evergreen classic in the world of children's literature. Widely attributed to Vishnugarman,



a versatile teacher, the stories were originally written in Sanskrit probably around 500 A.D. Pancha means five and tantra means doctrines of conduct or modes of action. According to legend, a king who had three foolish sons engaged Vishnugarman to reform them and enable them to grow up into worthy adults. The teacher achieved this by weaving a wondrous world of fables which bought out the five tantras which were innate in the, namely, confidence, creation of prosperity, earnest endeavour, friendship and knowledge.

The first stamp tells the story of the friendship between a monkey and a crocodile which turned sour when the crocodile fell prey to the evil influence of his greedy wife. The wife crocodile convinced the husband that she was ill and could be cured only by eating the heart of a monkey. Pretending to take him home for dinner, the crocodile got the monkey to travel on his back, but half way through the river he told him the truth. The monkey did not lose his presence of mind and replied that he had kept his heart safely in the tree on the river bank and he could happily give it to the crocodile if his wife needed it. The foolish crocodile turned back towards the river bank, where the monkey jumped off to safety.

The second story is that of a stupid lion whose downfall was brought by a crafty little rabbit. The big lion was mindlessly killing the animals of the jungle till one day when the rabbit informed him of the presence of another lion in the jungle. He could not tolerate a contender and wanted to eliminate him. The rabbit took him to a well, where the lion could see his own reflection. Mistaking the reflection to be the second lion, he jumped in to it, only to fall into the water and drown.

The third stamp illustrates how two crows who were helpless before a snake which preyed on their baby crows got rid of the menace by using their intelligence. The crows snatched a jewel necklace from the nearby village and dropped it next to the snake. The villagers had to kill the snake first to retrieve the necklace, thus making life easier for the crows.

The fourth stamp depicts the story of a foolish tortoise whose ambition to fly was fulfilled by two geese who were his friends. The geese held a stick between their beaks and the tortoise held on to it with his teeth. He lost hold of the stick and fell down to his death.

Theme : Literature, Children, Cartoons

THANGAL KUNJU MUSALIAR

26.10.2001

400

0.4 million



A man of many parts, Thangal Kunju Musaliar (1897-1966) is remembered for his contributions as an industrialist, educationist and philanthropist.

Hailing from the Kollam District of Kerala, circumstances forced him to travel to Sri Lanka, Brunei, Singapore and Malaysia early in life, in search of employment opportunities. After the sojourn that lasted a decade he returned home, rich in experience and bubbling with ideas. He started a small cashewnut processing unit which soon grew into a big industrial enterprise. Within a decade, Musaliar set up twenty six cashew factories and provided employment to twentyfive thousand workers, finding a mention in the Fortune Magazine as the world's biggest measures introduced by him, like fixed periods of work, wage rate system based on turn over and special incentives during festive occasions were trend setters for private sector enterprises of the country.

A man of remarkable foresight, Musaliar was quick to realise the importance of higher education. The Thangal Kunju Musaliar College of Engineering was born out of his efforts in 1958. The educational Trust founded by him today manages a network of institutions.

Welfare of the poor and the downtrodden was a life-long pre-occupation for Thangal Kunju Musaliar. In 1952, he founded the Janakshe ma Samajam (People's Welfare Society) to translate his concerns into action.

Musaliar was also a writer of repute, having authored books like, Prayogikadwaitam (the English version of which was titled Man and the World) and Communism, Socialism and Capitalism in the present context. He made a successful venture into the world of journalism with the weekly, Prabhatam, which was subsequently converted into a daily.

Theme : Personality

GLOBAL IODINE DEFICIENCY DISORDERS DAY

21.10.2001

400

0.4 million



The importance of Iodine in the human body and the adverse effects of its deficiency are well known. Just a teaspoon full of iodine taken over the course of entire life span can prevent a spectrum of disorders ranging from goitre to still births and

mental retardation, collectively known as Iodine Deficiency Disorders (IDD).

It has recently come to light that Iodine deficiency is the greatest single cause of preventable mental retardation among children. It is estimated that world over 1.6 billion people risk physical and mental impairment due to lack of tiny amounts of Iodine in their diet, out of which 500 million are children and about 10% of these cases are from India alone. Iodisation of salt has been found to be the easiest and cheapest method of Iodine supplementation as salt is consumed by all sections of the people. Several developed countries have successfully used this method for elimination of IDD.

The United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), which is known for its commitment to the welfare of children, came forward to assist the Government of India in its efforts to achieve the goal of Universal Salt Iodisation (USI). The programme, which was earlier known as NGCP was renamed as National Iodine Deficiency Disorder Control Programme (NIDDCP) in 1992 to shift focus from goitre to other invisible disorders. The programme launched by the Government of India in 1993 in collaboration with UNICEF has succeeded in co-opting the various agencies involved in this industry in the process of USI. As a result of these efforts the production of iodised salt which stagnated around 28 lakhs tonnes in early 90's has steadily risen to 41 lakh tonnes in 1997, thus providing access to 75% of the population.

Every year Global Iodine Deficiency Disorders Day is observed on 21st of October to highlight the progress achieved in the elimination of IDD and to identify the problems that remain to be addressed.

Theme : Medicine, Chemicals.

THE ARMY POSTAL SERVICE

Vispi S. Dastur

(Address to Philatelists at India National Philatelic Exhibition 1970)

When I joined the Posts and Telegraph's Department in the year of Hitler's war, 1939, philately was in its infancy in our country and it was the hobby and pursuit of the knowledgeable few such as Mr. Shroff and Mr. Jal Cooper. Not having yet found its money making possibilities, the Establishment treated philately with utter indifference if not high disdain. Though I was given a thorough training for two years in the duties of a superior Postal Officer which included a mastery of the departmental rules and regulations and the law of the land, not a word was said about the existence of philately. I became aware of stamp collectors only when they complained about removal of stamps from their foreign letters. Even this jolt was not enough to wake me up as I suggested the overprinting of Indian stamps for our Korean Mission in the hope that these stamps would have no value in India and would not be sent home as soldiers' booty.

In World War II, I had long and varied assignment in the Indian Army Postal Service from early 1942 to late 1947, during which I wandered all over Asia and in many parts of Africa and

Europe with an identity card as my passport and passenger ticket. The incidents and experiences of these journeys and missions would have made an interesting contribution to Postal History, if only I had kept some diary, notes or photographs of those days. This, however, was strictly prohibited under the security orders of the Army which I obeyed meticulously as I was a new recruit among the veterans. How I would have scribbled away my idle hours in Baghdad and Cairo, if only I had known that the Generals, Admirals and Air Marshals were then busy manuscripting their memoirs for posterity or should I say prosperity.

Development

Having made my excuses, I shall now say something about the characteristics, history, development and working of the Indian Army Postal Service.

The Army Postal Service - APS for short - is a branch of the Army which looks after the essential and particular postal needs of the Services during war and periods of war readiness and at all times when Forces are deployed in remote and difficult border regions or on missions overseas. The Army Postal Service maintains the closest links with the Posts and Telegraphs Department which recognises the army post offices as its own and provides all the officers and postal workers required to run them. The watchwords of APS are simplicity, mobility and flexibility. All the essential postal facilities - letter mail, parcel mail, registration, money orders, postal orders and saving schemes, are provided but none of the frills, not even the postman's rounds.

56 APO

Though ever ready to make their men comfortable in buildings and billets, army postal units are designed to provide instant service in tents and trucks ready to roll away at a moment's notice. And how fast and far they go! Take the case of what the whole of India now knows as 56 APO. It was born as 56 FPO in Secunderabad on the last day of June, 1941. In October it sailed away to Iraq with an infantry brigade. It roamed all over Iraq, Persia, Syria and Egypt before returning home in July, 1944. Later in the same year it hopped over to the Ledo Road Front in Burma. At the end of the War it marched back to Nasik. In March 1946 it was on the move again, this time to Japan, where it functioned up to the middle of 1947 at the air base of Iwakuni, near the war ravaged town of Hiroshima. On returning to India, it found a safe haven in New Delhi where it assumed a new role and a new name.

Field post offices are flexible in words and deeds, that is in the interpretation of rules and improvisation of facilities. An FPO is the smallest organised cell in the Army and yet it possesses an uncanny ability to divide itself and prosper. We give a postmaster, a clerk, a postman, a packer and at times a fighting soldier, a pair of seals and stamps and he becomes a field post office, doing the postal job that we know he can tackle. For many years one of my Posts and Telegraphs colleagues has been advocating the creation of a 'panchayati' post office but in vain. We have had one in the Army for as long as I can remember. It is our 'OC Tropps Mail Scheme' a kind of 'Ghar ka Dak Khana' under which one unit performs the essential post office work for all the other units in the same camp or station.

Personalised Service

Though APS follows the set procedures of the Department it is more flexible because it provides a

personalised service by following the old army adage 'rules are made for men, not men for rules'. As an example of flexibility, General Chaudhari, the former Chief of our Army, never tired of recounting the story of the field postmaster of the 5th Indian Division, of which he was the 'Q' Staff Officer during the battles in the Western Desert. Mail from England was extremely erratic in those days and came in big bunches with long gaps in between. The Commanding General made incessant and anxious inquiries about his mail. The field postmaster scratched his wise head and found a neat but unorthodox solution to this problem. He carefully arranged the mail received for the General and gave out his letters, not all at once, but one by one at reasonable and regular intervals. The morale of the General became high, he beamed at his Staff; in their mellow mood the Staff sent down fewer 'rockets' to the units; and consequently the Division was one big happy family. The postmaster got mentioned in despatches and the Posts and Telegraphs Department was none the worse for his indiscretion.

Early Missions

The first field post office was organised by the Posts and Telegraphs Department soon after its own reorganisation as a central institution in 1854. This FPO accompanied the Persian Field Force to Bushire in 1856, and provided the necessary postal facilities. Thereafter it became a standard practice to despatch field post offices with all Expeditionary Forces going overseas or engaged in important operations on the frontiers. These tours included missions to Abyssinia and Afghanistan, Malta and Cyprus, Egypt and Sudan, Burma, China, Somaliland and Tibet before the big shows of the two World Wars.

All previous missions of the Army Postal Service paled into insignificance before the enormous effort which it had to make in the First World War. Postal contingents accompanied the Expeditionary Forces to France, East Africa, Mesopotamia, Egypt and Iran and hundreds of field post offices ranged far and wide throughout the War and its aftermath, at places right up to 1920.

During the inter-war years, the Army Postal Organisation went back into hibernation. A few paper reforms were incorporated in the mobilisation schemes. These transferred administrative responsibility from the Posts and Telegraphs to the Army, gave combatant status to APS Jawans and intergrated the postal units in the war organisations of Brigades, Divisions, Areas and Armies but made no provision for military training of the postal soldiers.

Second World War

When war broke out again in 1939, the Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department had little difficulty in manning the postal complement of the modest forces originally earmarked for 'external defence', a euphemism for holding the British Empire against all challenges. It also had sufficient volunteers in its kitty for raising FPOs for the defence forces poised on the borders of Afghanistan and Iran to meet the imaginary threat from Russia. The advent of the Japanese in the war arena led to a hectic expansion of the Indian Base and its armed forces. APS expansion kept pace with these needs. Early in 1942 Indian field post offices which had hitherto been used only in foreign or frontier missions, were given permission to operate within India wherever the Army required them for purposes of

training, preparedness or actual combat. The tempo of FPO activity was stepped up accordingly. Whereas only 70-odd field and base post offices had been raised in the first three years of the War, their numbers doubled in 1942 and ultimately reached the peak figure of nearly 250. As FPOs begot smaller FPOs, their final tally was in the region of 400.

During the 2nd World War Indian FPOs functioned in the Persian Gulf, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Arabia, Abyssinia, Eritrea, Sudan, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Cyprus, Rhodes, Greece, Italy and the United Kingdom in the West; in Japan, Hongkong, Indo-China, Thailand, Borneo, Celebes, Java, Sumatra, Malaya and Burma in the East; and in the central bastions of India, the Indian Ocean anchorages in Cocos Island, the Andamans and Addu Atoll and Ceylon.

Since Independence, FPOs have become a permanent part of our Army set-up and have served the Armed Forces wherever required. Our missions overseas are no longer the Expeditionary Forces they used to be in the British days. They are now missions of peace such as the Indian Custodian Force in Korea, the International Control Commissions in Indo-China and the United Nations peace-keeping forces in Gaza and the Congo. Our FPOs have served with all these missions from beginning to end.

I haven't mentioned the fascinating details of this long history as they are fully covered by such standard works as Sir Geoffrey Clarke's, *The Post Office of India and its Story*, Col Sam's *The Post Office of India in the Great War*, Mulk Raj Anand's compilation, *Story of the Indian Post Office and Jal Cooper's classics, India used in Burma and India used Abroad*. One of these days I hope to publish something more substantial on the history of APS during World War II than the list of Indian Army Post Offices which was published last month.

Base Post Office

Field post offices do not and cannot act in isolation. They are essentially one end of the chain that carries a letter from a soldier to his family and vice versa. The central part of this chain is, however, the base post office and the whole mechanism is worked with the aid of such exotic codes as MEF, PAIFORCE, SEAC, BCOF, 56 APO and 99 APO. These codes must be simple and catching and not easily susceptible to rude remarks and ridicule. It was for this reason that General 'Jumbo' Wilson preferred the code PAINFORCE for his Persia and Iraq Force instead of the suggested PIF which sounded like an abbreviation of the rude word 'piffle', meaning idle, worthless talk. We have also learnt by experience that any mention of a place name in the codes can cause embarrassment to our clients. There was the case of a doting mother who travelled from a Gurgaon village to Delhi to hand over a tin of ghee to her soldier son who, she thought was serving somewhere near New Delhi 56 APO, which was in fact only a code address covering the whole country.

Mail Distribution

Mail for delivery through a field post office is not addressed to a post town of destination but to a unit followed by a approved security code which directs it to the right base post office. At the base post office, a complete record is kept of the units served by its field post offices and their day to day location. All incoming mail is first separated into the main branches of the Army, that is,

Headquarters, Armoured Corps, Artillery, Engineers, Signals, Infantry, Service Corps, Medical, Ordnance, Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and so on. The mail for each Arm and Service is then given to a block sorter, who is responsible for detailed sorting into units. Direct mail bags are closed for each field post office and they contain unit mail bundles all sorted for immediate distribution at the other end.

Forward of the Base Post Office, the carriage of mail to and from FPOs becomes an Army responsibility and the speed and frequencies of mail deliveries vary with the available means of transport, the state of communications and the exigencies of operations. Since there is no better morale booster than a letter from home and failing that a favourite newspaper, the Army does all that is humanly possible to keep the mail moving to the front. It was this realization that prompted the first airdrop of mail way back in 1916 to the besieged garrison of Kut in what was then known as Mesopotamia. During World War II, the ubiquitous Jeep took over the carriage of mail from the man, the mule, the horse and even the old-fashioned mail lorry. The long range aircraft supplanted the mail steamers and became the harbingers of the 'all up' air mail of the later days. In the closing stages of the Burma campaign, the mail-minded and P.R. oriented Mountbatten inspired the wholesale airlift of mail and newspapers from Calcutta, Comilla, Akyab and Imphal to the forward airfields in the heart of Burma. This was the famous 'milk round' which was handled by specially designed postal units operating at the despatching and receiving airfields. Now with the improvement of road and air communications, normal mail deliveries are so quick and regular that special mail runs are seldom required except for the remote and inaccessible forward posts in thick jungles or snowy ranges (or in the event of an IAC strike). That is where the new workhorse, the helicopter, comes in. The Posts and Telegraphs Department inaugurated their first helicopter mail service the other day with due ceremony and publicity. APS has been using the same and several other helicopter mail services for many years.

Organisation of APS

Now a few words about the organisation of APS. Our basic unit is of course the FPO. Each Brigade and equivalent formation has an FPO of its own and the Divisions, Corps and Armies have additional FPOs for troops not included in a Brigade. Immediately behind the Combat Zone is the concentration of camps and depots for reinforcing men and materials engaged in battle. FPOs are also dotted all over this area, called the Communication Zone, and they are grouped round a section base post office which acts as a forward mail and sorting agency. The nerve centre of the whole organisation, the base post office, is located farther back at a national communication centre, where it can work round the clock in all seasons without being disturbed by the din and turmoil of the War and Communication Zones. There are other specialized postal units and of course the Postal Staff Officers but the work of these back room boys is not of general interest to the public.

Sunday Deliveries

We are the proud followers of our parent Posts and Telegraphs Department but are not afraid when the occasion requires to pioneer new ideas, materials and organisation or to reject change for the sake of change. It

can be said that air-lift and air-drop of mail was pioneered by the Army Postal Service in World War I. The light-weight inland letter form with which you are all familiar was introduced by the Forces during the last Great War. The mobile post offices that you see in Delhi are the fashionable and sophisticated copies of the rough and ready field post office lorries. The stock phrases in your Greetings Telegrams such as Number Four - "A Happy New Year to You"- have been extracted from the hundreds of phrases included in the Expeditionary Forces Message Code of the two World Wars. During the last War, we also pioneered the schooling and training of budding postal clerks who had hitherto been trained only in the school of experience. Now training schools have also become a standard establishment of the Posts and Telegraphs Department. On the other hand we did not toe the line when the Posts and Telegraphs Department decided to shut down completely on Sundays. To the pleasure and profit of the Jawans, FPOs continue to provide letter mail facilities on Sundays and holidays with a smile and without a charge.

The benefits that we derive from our Posts and Telegraphs connection are too obvious and too many to be enumerated, but the greatest of them all is the honorary membership of the World Postal Community. A word from our Director General to his counterpart in Cairo and the Indian mail was cleared for delivery to our UNEF contingent even before it had settled down in its first camp on the Suez Canal.

Overprinted Stamps

Having lured distinguished philatelists to this assembly by promising a talk in some way related to philately. I must now say something on the subject to FPO stamps, overprints, covers and cancellations.

Wherever our field post offices go, in India or overseas, they function as a part of the Indian Posts and Telegraphs system and use Indian postage stamps. This was no problem in the days of Pax Britannica when India Expeditionary Forces were mounted to curb and conquer recalcitrant countries and there was no question of asking their permission to use one kind of postage stamps or the other. Problems did arise where the Forces operated from friendly or nominally free countries such as Iraq, Iran, Egypt, Sudan and the Malayan States of yester years. In such cases complicated negotiations took place and the resulting treaties or protocols permitted the Indian field post offices to function in their own way and use their own postage stamps. Now that we send only Peace Missions on foreign assignments, these arrangements are worked out in advance, usually by the United Nations Headquarters.

As keen philatelists some of you may have come across Indian FPO cancellations on Commonwealth or even foreign stamps. These are all genuine cancellations resulting from local orders under which Indian FPOs have on occasions used Commonwealth and foreign stamps on mail sent directly to some countries.

I really don't know why Indian postage stamps were overprinted for the China Expeditionary Force of 1900 and the Indian Expeditionary Forces of the First World War, but the reasons obviously were local and limited as there was no overprinting whatever during World War II.

As I mentioned in the beginning, my own reasons for recommending overprinting of the stamps used by the FPOs of the Indian Custodian Force in Korea had neither a philatelic

nor a national bias. This is what I wrote to the Director General Posts and Telegraphs on 25th August, 1953:-

The FPOs (in Korea) will transact all postal business including sale of postage stamps in local currency. The sale price of individual stamps will be fixed in such a way that no gain in currency will accrue to the purchasers. There is, however, the danger of excessive stocks being purchased for eventual use in India out of the gains of exchange (in non-postal transactions). Suitable overprinting of postage stamps is, therefore, recommended to counteract hoarding and remittances to India.

By the time our Control Commissions reached the new and sovereign states of Indo-China, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, we had become aware of the philatelic world and the importance of judicious and justifiable overprints in that context. The first overprints were issued in December 1954 and these were followed by overprints on the new series of Indian definitives introduced in 1957 and 1968. When time permitted, we even indulged in the luxury of special cancellations and first day covers.

Though an Indian Contingent formed part of the United Nations Emergency Force in Gaza throughout the ten years of its existence and Indian FPOs functioned with the Force at Gaza, El Arish, El Ballah, Abu Suweir and Cairo, we did not go in for the general overprint of Indian stamps used by them. There were two reasons for this. Firstly we did not wish to poach on the legitimate domain of our Egyptian friends and the new-born United Nations postal administration and secondly we were content to do what the other Contingents, the Canadians, the Swedes and the Brazilians were doing - use ordinary national stamps or no stamps at all.

In the Congo, the conditions were different. Though there were two very stamp-conscious Governments in the Congo and the short-lived Katanga, the place was in fact being run by the United Nations with forces contributed by uncommitted members, chief among them India. I had therefore no hesitation in recommending an overprint for our Contingent in ONUC. To go with the overprint on our map series of stamps, we selected a map design for the First Day Cover, the first cover produced for APS by the Nasik Security Press.

Last, but not the least, our homage to the makers of Independent India, Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. As APS had been associated, in a very small way, with the Peace Missions sponsored by or under the inspiration of Nehru, we commemorated his memory on the Army Day 1965 by overprinting the Nehru stamp for the FPOs with the United Nations Emergency Force in Gaza and the International Control Commissions in Indo-China. The overprint was also marked by a First Day Cover which depicted Nehru's work as a soldier of peace.

Our salute to Gandhiji on his birth centenary was simple and humble. It was a special slogan cancellation designed to highlight the beauty and theme of the national stamps issued on the occasion. As time was short and the Department was busy preparing for an international conference at Tokyo, we were unable to publicise this cancellation, We have, however, done our best to supply specimens to genuine philatelists who have approached us in this regard.

Stamp Conscious Country

The country has at last become stamp-conscious.

The Posts and Telegraphs Department is planning to produce beautiful new stamps. India is rich in cultural, political, historical and natural heritage and abounds in subjects fit for representation on stamps. The protagonists in various interests are advancing the claims of their heroes, home states and hobbies for enshrinement in philatelic glory. May I join this crowd and raise a hurrah for the Armed Forces and their post offices? Our Armed Forces are also rich in history and tradition; their flags and pennants evoke enthusiasm and pride; their picturesque ceremonies and parades elicit applause and admiration; and their Jawans are colourful and photogenic. Why not more of them on our stamps? And why not a set of stamps for the exclusive use at the Army Post Offices? The Pundits say that this has not been done before. I say why not now and why not before others.

On our part we have made plans to encourage philately in the Services by opening stamp clubs in military camps and stations and by providing them with new issues, first day covers and special cancellations through the philatelic bureaux now functioning with the base post offices.

Well, Gentlemen, you love the stamps but I love the letters and so do all the soldiers and their postmen in whose ranks I am proud to stand.

(Courtesy - India's Stamp Journal - March 1971)

Courtesy : Inpex & Asiana - 77 Journal

TIEPEX - 2001

Yet another glorious chapter was written in the history of South India Philatelists Association during 20-23 Sept 2001, when a national level philatelic exhibition titled TIEPEX-2001 was organised in association with the Department of Posts at Lalit kala Academi, Chennai.

The exhibition highlighted the progress of our country in the fields of Transportattion, Information technology, Entertainment and Pollution control. In all 106 collectors (Juniors 47, Seniors 59) put up their heart-throb collections in 314 frames. Four attractively designed covers with special cancellations were released on the four days of exhibition.

The exhibition was inaugurated on 20th Sept by Mr. M.A.Alagappan, Vice Chairman, Tube investments of India Ltd and the special cover was released by Dr.U.Srinivasaragavan, Chief Post Master General, Tamilnadu circle. Smt.K.Noorjehan, Post Master General, Northern Region, Tamilnadu circle, presided over the valedictory function. Mr.Suresh Vice-Chairman SSI received the special cover released by Smt.Noorjehan, PMG. on 23rd sept and distributed the awards. Altogether, 58 collectors received awards. The break up figures show 5 vermeil, 8 large silver 20 silver and 25 bronze were shared by the enthusiastic exhibitors. The vermeils were taken by Mr.H.Mohd Salahudeen, Mrs. A.J.Hema Malini, Mr.J.Rolands Nelson, Mr. Naresh Agarwal and Dr.Narendra Kumar Saboo. The exhibits were evaluated by a panel of jury headed by Mr.Dilip shah.

A colour ful souvenir was brought out during the occasion containing information filled articles, messages from well known people and well wishers of our association.

Our thanks are due to M/s T.I. Cycles, Southern Railway, Pollution Control Board and other well wishers who sponsored and made the exhibition a grand success. Our thanks are also due to the Department of Post Officials. We wish to place our thanks to Mr.Dilip shah who took great pains to evaluate the exhibits going through all the frames in depth.

Our heart felt thanks are greatly due to Mr.M.A.Sayeed for instituting a trophy* in the name of his mother with a donation of Rs.10,000/-for every exhibiton from TIEPEX-2002

"SARAH SAEED TROPHY".



17. Air Parcel Service - 30th January 1949: (Cont)

These rates are inclusive of postage and air mail fee and no separate air fee will henceforth be payable. For registered parcels, the usual registration fee will be charged in addition.

Example of such Air Parcels are very scarce and my collection of Modern Postal History does not have a single example to show here. If any reader have the example, my request to forward a xerox copy of the same, so that it can be included in future.

18. All Up Scheme - 1st April 1949:

With effect from the 1st April 1949 air surcharge of ½ Anna for post cards and 1 Anna for letters, provided by clause 154 - A (2) of Postal Guide of P & T Deptt., was abolished and an "All Up" service was introduced, under which all inland letters (including postal articles on which postage was paid at letter mail rates), and post cards would be carried by air as the normal means of transmission, wherever air transmission is available and is advantageous. It means that the registered mail i.e. book packets, blind literature packet, sample & pattern packets, registered news papers and money orders would be carried by the existing surface routes unless surcharged for air conveyance with requisite air fee.

The inland rates of postage on letters and post cards were revised vide Postal Notice No. 75 dated 1st April 1949, which were as follows:

Letters for a weight not exceeding 1 tola	- 2 Annas
For every tola or fraction	- 1 Anna
Post Cards - Single	- 9 Pies.
Post Cards - Reply	- 1 Anna 6 Pies.

Before including "All Up Scheme", Night Air Mail Service was introduced on 30th January 1949. The N.A.S., was an experiment towards night flying in India. Actually, the night flying reduced considerably the time factor on mail from one place to another. Aircraft flying from Trivandrum to Srinagar used to make night halts at Madras and New Delhi. Now the mail can reach its destination the next day. The successful launching in N.A.S., leads the All Up Scheme. The P & T Department laid further instructions in connection with "All Up Scheme" vide DGPO Circular No. 98 dated 1.4.1949, which were as follows:

- I. Air Mail labels were no longer required to be affixed on inland letters and post cards. Outward foreign air mail articles, inland surcharged airmail packets and air parcels should however bear these labels.
- II. All special Air Mail Letter Boxes, which had been placed for posting of air mails, would be withdrawn from 1st April 1949.
- III. For the present, insured articles would not be forwarded by air but only by the surface route. Inland registered letters (including VP letters) and post cards would be given air transmission.
- IV. All acknowledgements including those for parcels would be given air transmission where advantageous.
- V. Surface letters and post cards for and from foreign countries, will continue to be forwarded as at present by surface route and NOT by air. Outward and inward foreign air mails would be given air transmission. Inward foreign air mail to be given internal air

transmission within India should however be invariably accompanied by AV-2 Forms. As an exception, surcharged air mail from Pakistan would be given air transmission within India without any AV-2 Forms.

The first Air letter dated 20.11.1950, originated from Uganda, reached Bombay where it got a rubber-stamp in two lines, which reads - "RECEIVED WITHOUT AV.2-HENCE / FORWARDED BY SURFACE ROUTE."

The Second Air letter dated 3.08.1951, originated from Indochine, reached Calcutta where it got a rubber-stamp in three lines - "Country of origin did not require / Air Transmission within India Hence / sent by Surface Route".

A Special bonanza was announced for Nepal, by the Indian Post & Telegraphs Department, vide the Air Mail Postal Notice No. 13, dated 7th June 1951, which included Kathmandu (Nepal) in "All Up Scheme" on and from 29th May 1951. With effect from that day, the Indian National Airways opened air services, for Calcutta - Patna - Kathmandu route, which would be utilized for the conveyance of first class mails. Such air service would operate on Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday to the following Schedule:

05.30	Dep.	Calcutta	Arr.	16.35
07.30	Arr.	Patna	Dep.	14.35
08.00	Dep.	Patna	Arr.	14.15
09.00	Arr.	Kathmandu	Dep.	13.15

Other classes of mails, as well as air parcels coming or going from Kathmandu (Nepal) could also be forwarded by air by this air service, subject to the usual conditions for transmission of such classes of mail by the internal air services, on payment of air fee at the rates prescribed for internal air mails, which were as follows:

Packets and Newspapers	- 1 Anna per tola or part thereof, In addition to the ordinary postage.
Air Parcel	- 10 Annas for every 20 tolas or part thereof.

18/A. Delivery Stamp - 1st April 1949:

The Rule 110 of P & T Manual Volume VI and the Rule 107 (e) of the P & T Manual Volume V deals with the procedure of stamping of paid articles received for delivery.

With effect from 1st April 1949 the P & T Department had decided to discontinue the Delivery stamp on paid unregistered articles received for delivery in post offices in the 15 cities mentioned below:

They were Ahmedabad, Amritsar, Bombay, Calcutta, Cuttack, Delhi, Howrah, Hyderabad DN, Kanpur, Lucknow, Madras, Nagpur, Patna, Poona and Shillong.

Mail of above cities would no longer be impressed with delivery date stamp before distribution to postmen but should be sorted direct for postmen's beat. This system was introduced with a view to ensure that the letters were promptly delivered and the public would get full advantage of it in the shape of earlier delivery.

The DGPO Circular No. 1 dated 2nd April 1949 also stated that special orders had been issued to introduce effective checks to guard against delays in delivery. Town inspectors had been

asked to exercise vigilant supervision over delivery staff and check the postmen's work while they were on their beats.

But, the above step created misapprehension in minds of general public that the stamping practice was discontinued in order to cover up delays in transit under the new procedure of sending all letters and post cards by air as the normal mode of transmission wherever possible under "All Up Scheme" which was introduced on and from 1st April 1949. Therefore, the matter was reconsidered further and was decided to revert back to the old practice of stamping all articles before they were issued for delivery vide DGPO Circular No. 19 dated 15th June 1949.

19. Urban Mobile Post Office - 1st April 1949:

First Urban Mobile Post Office was opened in Nagpur on 1st April 1949, as an experiment - "To achieve full potential of N.A.S.". As Nagpur was the centre of N.A.S., activities, the first mobile was introduced here only to see that a mail posted as late as 8.30 P.M., can be delivered at about 10 A.M. of next day, in any of the four N.A.S., cities. Actually, this Mobile PO moved around the city touching all strategic points to collect mails including registered mails till 8.30 PM. then the MPO used to go straight to airport to deliver the mail directly to N.A.S. Then the mail was sorted there only, and loaded in different four N.A.S., air crafts, which will take the mail to its destination.

Slowly, public became of the service given by Mobile PO. And then, during 1951, Mobile PO were opened in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras (1.8.1951) and New Delhi (2.10.1951), to cater all N.A.S., cities. The maximum efficient utilisation of MPO was found only in N.A.S., cities. Thus, within a span of 14 hours, a mail coming from Calcutta can be delivered at Bombay, Madras, New Delhi or Nagpur.

Once, the MPO became successful in the five N.A.S., cities, MPO were introduced in all major cities of India. There were 18 such MPO functioning during 1973-74.

Then came the Bolt from the Blue. The Indian Airlines Corporation decided to discontinue the Night Air Mail Service from October 1973. And this led the downfall of Mobile PO. During 1990, it was decided to withdraw this MPO facility in phase manner. And by end of 1996 MPO's came to a halt and not working in any city of India except New Delhi.

REQUEST

SIPA members directory is being updated and put in the web site. Hence interested members please inform their present address, collecting details, etc. immediately so as to get included in the current version of members directory.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

SIPA wishes all its members and stamp collectors a happy and prosperous New Year with all health and wealthy collection.

JUNIOR CORNER

WHAT AND HOW TO COLLECT

by JUN-JUN

"Collect to enjoy your hobby. Do not worry over much about ulterior objects. The highest value of Philately in the life of man, woman or child today is as a tonic and relief from the stress and strain of everyday life. Use it as a refresher of the mind after the day's trip, and calmer of the common of life as it is mostly lived today."

- FRED J. MELVILLE

The stage has now come for us to discuss the all-important questions: What to Collect and How to collect.

These questions are not as simple and straightforward as they sound. Gone are the days when one could depend on the stamps coming on the mail received at home or by friends or institutions. For one thing, much of the bulk-mailing is nowadays done on the basis of meter franking or other arrangements where by neither stamps nor meter franks are required for mail. It is also a common phenomenon that most of such mail as do bear stamps will by and large have only the definitive issues and, hence, you will have a surfeit of unwanted common stamps and be forced to look elsewhere for commemorative issues. Then there is also the question of completing and sustaining the collection by producing from time to time the new issues which, unfortunately for us, are too numerous. You see how the problem gets complicated, the more you think about it?

Of course, you can collect what you like out of what comes your way. It is no doubt a form of collecting, but a form which would not give any enduring pleasure or satisfaction. If you desire this satisfaction you would have to resort to 'buying' one way or other. And there starts the trouble! So, before you start buying or somebody else starts buying for you - and by 'buying' I mean outright purchase, exchange, barter, etc. - you have to make up your mind as to what it is that you really want. Before proceeding further, I would place before you the following thoughts which you should always keep in your mind:

1. Decide what you want to collect and why.
2. Be deliberate in your collecting, as vacillation will mean dissatisfaction.
3. Curb your desire to outbeat somebody else's collection.
4. Form your budget and live within it.
5. Observe self-discipline, team spirit, honesty and integrity in case you are a member of a collecting group.

During our first talk, I had told you of the many who had started collecting stamps and had given it up after some time. It is not really that they had lost interest in it; I told you then, we can enjoy this hobby even when we have to ration out the time and money needed for collecting stamps. They had to give up the hobby even if it be for a time, because they had neglected one or more of the golden rules above.

The important question, then, is what you want to collect and why. There are mainly two types of collecting. These are (1) Country-wise collecting and (2) Thematic collecting. Let us see what they mean.

Time was when one need not have considered the question of what to collect. The number of stamp issuing

countries was small and the number of stamps issued annually was also small. So one could find it feasible, if the purse could bear it, to collect stamps of all countries. In other words, one could hope to form a general collection of the stamps of most of the stamp issuing countries. But that was more than fifty years ago. Today one can't even dream of such things.

There are about 200 postal administrations today who are issuing stamps for genuine needs, and there have been several postal administrations which issued stamps in the past and then disappeared due to changes in national boundaries and political independence. At a rough guess, about 230,000 different stamps have been issued so far, without taking into consideration paper, watermark and perforation differences and other varieties. Thousands of new stamps and allied material are issued every year. If any one is feeble enough to hope to collect all the world's new issues, he should be prepared to spend about two hundred thousand rupees a year! So a general world collection is an impossibility these days; it was so even twenty five years ago or more.

Collectors were, therefore, forced to restrict their country collections to a few countries, one of them being one's own country invariably. A country collection, particularly of the stamp of one's own country, has its own charm. Such a collection would provide a glimpse of the political history of the nation, the state of technology and economy current from time to time and the highlights of its cultural traditions and treasures.

Let us have a brief look at the stamps and other philatelic materials of India. As you may have seen from the chronology of the first stamp issues India has the distinction of being the first country of Asia to issue postage stamps. Indeed it can be said that India has had the proud privilege of leading Asia in the field of organised postal communications. (The late) Jal Cooper - the great India Philatelist - wrote in his book on 'India Used Abroad': "The Indian Post Office has an established fame of being a historical centre from which have radiated organised postal communications throughout the Middle East comprising Arabia, Persia and Turkey, and in the Far East to the Straits Settlements, Sarawak and Borneo. India has been the pioneer of modern postal progress throughout Asia, for the Indian Post offices in Turkish Arabia and the Persian Gulf, date back to over 100 years." (The late) W. Renouf - an other great student and lover of Indian Philately - wrote in his book on India Stamps Used Abroad; "Used abroad and overprinted stamps may perhaps be justly compared to satellites. India, in these respects, can perhaps challenge any country except Great Britain, which is of course in a class by itself. India can point to a wide range of overprints in the Straits Settlements, Zanzibar, East Africa, Somaliland, C.E.F. and I.E.F. issues, while in used abroad, without overprint, the field is of equal interest."

The stamps and other philatelic materials of our country are treasure houses of India's history, cultural traditions and national integration. A country collection, starting with one's own country, is what every philatelist can and should try to get together. This is equally true of other forms of collecting such as Aero-philately and Postal History. In all these fields of collecting one can unhesitatingly adopt the practical principle of starting with one's own country.

Collecting country-wise, however, has several problems of its own. Firstly, such a collection has to have completeness about it. In other words, we should have at least one specimen of every stamp issued, as otherwise the gaps would be created which can be quite frustrating. While one can easily obtain recent issues, the problem of procuring some of the older stamps can be very difficult at times. Secondly, such a collection would have no place for stamps of other countries which one may fancy.

A new type of collecting has come into vogue in recent years to overcome such problems. One collects something which has some sort of appeal or attraction. What feature of a stamp does appeal to you most? Its shape? Its colour? These, no doubt, have some appeal. But far more appealing to you must be subject depicted on the stamp - be it flowers, animals, buildings, ships, scenic beauty, locomotives, children, maps or some other aspect. Every one of us gets attracted by one or more of the large variety of subjects depicted on the stamps. If we are drawn to a particular subject either because of our familiarity with it or because of its appeal to our instincts, emotions, or intellect, would we not look for all the stamps bearing on this subject and try to put together a collection which tell us the story behind the subject we have chosen? When you thus collect stamps by subjects or themes, you become a thematic collector or a Thematelist, if one may use this expression.

The advantage of this form of collecting is that one need not collect all the stamps issued by a country; one need collect only those stamps which deal with the specific subject. The pleasure of the hunt for more and more stamps dealing with the theme, the thirst for gaining more and more knowledge of the subject, the thrill of possessing a stamp for which a strenuous hunt had to be organised - all these add zest even to this type of collecting.

Stanley Phillips, in his book 'Stamp Collecting' has this to say about this form of collecting:

"It is a tribute to the breadth of our hobby that there are very few branches of human interest and knowledge which cannot be in same way illuminated by postage stamps. By design, by association, by contrast, and by inscription, every stamp or group of stamps has its story to tell, and the collector who gets most fun out of the hobby is he, or she, who has the fullest appreciation of what lies behind the stamp and who does not merely treat it as just one more specimen to be added to a numerical score."

Topical Collecting is another term used to denote thematic collecting. Because of its comparative freedom from the discipline of having to collect stamps in complete sets, because of the instructional value of a collection of stamps dealing with the same subject, and because of the appeal of such a collection to one's aesthetic sense, this form of collecting has become extremely popular among philatelists throughout the world.

In 1935, India brought out a set of eight stamps depicting the various types of vehicles for transporting mail: the Runner, the Bullock Cart, the Tonga, the Camel, the Train, the Steamer, the Lorry and the Plane. This was followed up in 1954 by a set of 4 stamps depicting the progress achieved in the modes of mail transportation through the period 1854 to 1954. From the slow pace of the Runner trudging along the scorched sands and rugged paths to the zoom of the modern jet planes is an

exciting transformation indeed. Other countries had also similar problems and achievements, and are reflected in their stamps. You see how you can build up an excitingly wonderful theme out of such stamps?

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.

Every one of you must be familiar with these lines. Take a look then at the multitude of stamps that portray the life and achievements of the large galaxy of Great men who have shaped the thoughts, endeavour and destiny of nations and generations of humanity. Think of the wonderful themes one can build up around these stamps!

The idea, the approach, the study one undertakes to develop this approach, the development of the idea into a concrete theme reflecting the approach adopted, the hunt for stamps which illustrate the idea well, and finally the assembling of the stamps in a manner that brings out the story succinctly - how rewarding and enjoyable such a collection would be!

One of the greatest attractions of thematic collecting is the freedom it allows to the collector to develop the collection along as original a fashion as he or she chooses. No other form of collecting gives so much free play to originality, individuality and personality as does thematic.

We have discussed the two most important types of collecting in some detail so that you can have an appreciation of the pleasures and problems you would have in taking to either type of collecting. Once you decide on any one or both types of collecting, further questions will arise. Should you collect the new issues on First Day Covers? Should you collect the stamps in mint or used condition? Should you collect the stamps in blocks of 4? And should the blocks be corner blocks with signals, controls etc.? These are some common questions often posed by the young beginner.

Let us first consider the problem of mint versus used stamps. Philatelically, the difference between a mint and a fine used stamp is often marginal. The advantage of a mint stamp lies in the fact that it would be in the original condition of issue, the design would be very clear etc.; on the other hand, it costs more to collect mint stamps and their maintenance in the original condition would involve further expenses. The advantages of collecting in used condition are that it is a less expensive method of collecting and not so costly as mint stamps for maintenance; the disadvantages are that the gum on gummed stamps would be missing and it would not be always easy to acquire fine used stamps. In the ultimate analysis, the choice should depend on one's budget.

So far as collecting in blocks of 4, whether corner blocks or otherwise, it is a luxury one can very well avoid, if a modest budget is planned. In regard to first day covers, one has to remember that it is costlier than collecting mint stamps, while the stamps on the first day covers would have the status and value of used stamps only. Added to this is the cost of maintaining these covers. One has, therefore, to consider the advantages, if any, of collecting first day covers before taking to this type of collecting.

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