



Uncovering postal heritage



Listen to this article now



00:00



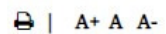
1.0x

00:09

Three days and 300 enthusiasts — the South India Philatelists' Association is set to host the country's first covers-only exhibition



Published: 11th January 2020 06:56 AM | Last Updated: 11th January 2020 06:56 AM



By [Kannalmozhi Kabilan](#)

Express News Service

CHENNAI: At a time when whole generations have had little need to keep up with the postal system, the South India Philatelists' Association has quietly been nurturing the interest of hobbyists in stamps and postal paraphernalia. Since 1956, the association has played a significant role in preserving the country's philatelic heritage, besides inducting more and more enthusiasts to this part of life and history. While it has celebrated the craft through exhibitions, special covers and grandiose collections through the decades, it now has another milestone to mark its work — the country's first covers-only exhibition.



envelope or package with a stamp affixed. It's usually released to commemorate special stamps, people or events and valid for a limited period of time. At his office in Periamet, association treasurer CG Bhaskar lays out some of the significant covers they are preparing for display. There's a first flight cover released by Air India when it was still owned by JRD Tata. Tata himself had flown the flight, notes Bhaskar. The stamp issued for the event had been valid only for that single day. There's a cricket cover with Sachin Tendulkar's face in the stamp.

There are a few themed around Gandhi. Pointing to the one featuring Gopala Krishna Gokhale, Bhaskar talks about how Gandhi had seen the man as a mentor and upon his advice decided to travel across the country before picking up a fight in its name. It is pointing to snippets like these, B Mahesh Parekh, association secretary, says, that the stamps are a great way to gather knowledge about the world. And it is a great stress-buster, he adds. Perhaps that's why his association has members from 14 to 96 years of age. Bhaskar says that they see many people return to the hobby in their later years after having given it up for life's many demands.

Naturally, the exhibitors at today's event are also from this large pool of talent. Besides active collectors from across the country, many schools and children are also set to participate — displaying their individual and collective work. The association takes particular care in ensuring that they keep the children informed about the world of philately. They hold programmes and awareness sessions in schools every week. Children are even given free stamps to get them started on their journey . With India Posts lending ample support for the event, the exhibition will also host a My Stamp counter. It gives people the rare privilege to get stamps made with their pictures. It's scheduled to be held at Sananda Kalyana Mandapam in Rajkilpakkam from today till Monday, 12 pm to 7 pm.