



SIPA

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BUTTERFLIES
18

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PHILATELIC
EXHIBITIONS 25

Quarterly

EDITORIAL

(Con'd from Jan-Mar 2026 issue)

C.JURY AND JUDGING

As known, in a competitive exhibition sponsored and organised by India Post, the competitive exhibits are evaluated by a Jury team, comprised of a minimum of two senior philatelists and one officer of India Post as apprentice Jury; all headed by the top local official of India Post, Director of Postal Services, Post Master General or Chief Post Master General, as the case may be.

In this traditional regulations according to the status of the exhibition and district as stage, philatelists availability, utilisation of allotted funds etc., variation and relaxation upto the extent of utilising handy local philatelists as jury is being done. This situation brings in philatelists with inadequate knowledge in all classes and experience as jury. Such a situation leads to controversial decisions which in turn leads to bad feelings among philatelists and troubled times for the organisers.

If regulations are strictly followed cordial relations between authorities and exhibitors can be created and improvements in propagation of philately will prevail.

D. AWARDS

The inside story of "awards" is quite interesting. In any contest or competition generally the number of prizes or awards is definite, depending on the final performance and status, the winner can be one, two or three as the case be. Here also the awards are based on performance only but on a broad scale of 5/10, slab, after the evaluation is done by the jury mostly at the end of the second day of any exhibition. As the organisers will not be able to make differentiated awards, within the time available between the end of second day and award function they modify the awardees list according to the availability of medals kept at

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the organisers disposal. On some occasions, the reverse also happens, viz exhibitors getting higher awards than their exhibit's real status which in turn spoil his future improvements as the award will give the exhibitor a pride and complacency.

E. CARNIVAL - INDIA POST

Starting as a project for creating and spreading awareness for philately in the region, the exhibition finally turn out as a carnival for the staff of India Post of the region.

Enjoying board and lodge, meeting old colleagues and friends, Cultural extravaganza evenings etc. have become part and parcel of India-Post exhibitions rather than putting whole hearted efforts in bringing new collectors to the hobby of stamps collecting and extending more avenues to existing collectors to continue.

Through this editorial, it is wished that the situation is modified for the betterment of philately and for the happiness of philatelists.

P.S :- If anybody sincerely interested in spreading the hobby of philately among students, please, 1. Bring to exhibitions only really interested students (there in every class of a school, there the few interested ones) 2. Allow and make them spend sometime on the exhibits displayed, explained by a philately known guide, volunteer. 3. Permit the children to spend few minutes with the dealers making small purchases with their limited pocket money to add to their collections.

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-Editor

WORLD OF BUTTERFILES

S.K.Lakshmanan
Joint Secretary, SIPA

Prologue:

A **Butterfly** is a dayflying insect belonging to the order **Lepidoptera**, the same group that includes Moths. Butterflies are known for their brightly coloured wings covered with tiny scales (Fig. 1).

Butterfly and Moth - Differences :

The identification of butterflies and moths can be done by the following methods.

Colour :

Bright colours are typical of Butterflies, whereas moths are mostly subdued in colour, though some are strikingly bright (Fig. 2)



Fig.2



Fig.2

Flying Time:

Butterflies are day-fliers (diurnal), whereas Moths are night-fliers (nocturnal)(Fig. 3).



Fig.3

Antennae:

The antennae of Butterflies are long and club-shaped, whereas those of Moths are generally short and hairy (Fig. 4).



Fig.4

Resting Position:

Butterflies can rest with wings either closed above the body or held open, whereas Moths typically rest with wings outspread (Fig. 5).



Fig 5

Stages of development:

Courtship:

The male hovers around the female during courtship to determine if she is prepared to mate (Fig.6).



Fig 6

Mating:

Once the female responds positively to courtship, mating occurs through the joining of their abdominal ends (Fig.7).



Fig. 7

Metamorphosis:

Unlike mammals, butterflies do not give birth to live young, and unlike birds, they do not incubate their eggs after mating (Fig. 8).



Fig. 8

Before becoming adults, they undergo four distinct stages in a process known as metamorphosis (Fig.9).

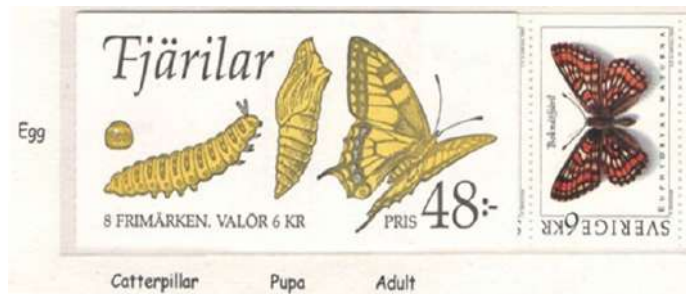


Fig. 9

Egg:

Once mating is complete, Butterflies deposit their fertilized eggs on or under host plant leaves, providing nourishment for the emerging caterpillars; the eggs differ in form, size, and colour among species (Fig. 10).



Fig. 10

Caterpillar:

A few days after being laid, the eggs hatch into small caterpillars. These larvae have prolegs on their abdomens that enable movement. The head is generally round, sometimes slightly flattened, and is fitted with a pair of antennae. Species differences are reflected in their size, shape, and colour. They feed on host plant foliage and grow at a rapid pace (Fig. 11).



Fig. 11

Pupa:

After feeding and growing rapidly, the caterpillar attaches itself to a leaf, stem, or other support. It then sheds its outer skin one final time to form the pupa. Butterflies

usually have a naked chrysalis without a protective silk covering (Fig. 12).



Fig. 12

The pupa varies in shape, size, and colour depending on the species. Some are green to blend with leaves, while others are brown to resemble twigs or dried foliage, an adaptation that helps protect them from predators.

This stage may last from about one to two weeks in many species, though in some cases especially in colder climates it can extend for several months.

Adult:

After metamorphosis is finished, the fully formed butterfly comes out, unfolds its wings, and prepares for its first flight (Fig. 13).



Fig. 13

Manifestation of Colour:

The colors on butterfly wings are produced by tiny scales, which contain melanins responsible for black and brown hues.

However, blues, greens, reds, and iridescent shades typically arise not from pigments but from the microscopic structure of the scales.

This structural coloration results from the way light is coherently scattered by the photonic crystal-like arrangement of the scales (Fig. 14).



Fig. 14

Body Structure:

A Butterfly's body is divided into three main parts: head, thorax, and abdomen. The head bears the compound eyes, antennae, and the coiled proboscis used for feeding on nectar. The thorax carries two pairs of wings and three pairs of legs used for flight and movement. The abdomen contains the digestive, reproductive, and respiratory organs (Fig.15).



Fig. 15

1. Legs, 2. Proboscis, 3. Eye, 4. Antennae, 5. Fore Wings, 6. Hind Wings and 7. Abdomen.

Naming Pattern:

Butterflies are usually called by local names, resulting in the same species having different names in different localities (Fig.16).

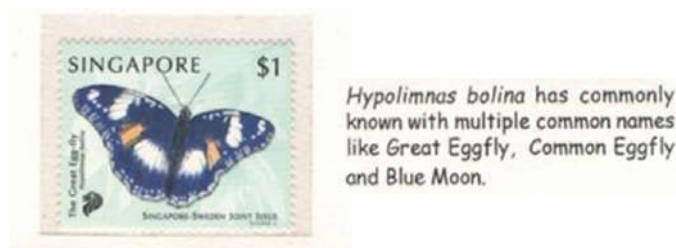


Fig. 16

Carolus Linnaeus (Fig.17) was an 18th-century Swedish botanist, physician, and zoologist who



Fig. 17

established the modern biological naming system known as binomial nomenclature. This system assigns a unique genus and species name to each organism, ensuring consistency and clarity in identification worldwide.

To be properly formatted, in Scientific Name the first letter of the Genus name is always capitalized, while the Species name is not. Additionally, the Scientific Name is always *Italicized* (Fig.18).



Fig.18

Morphology:

Dorsal and Ventral Variation:

In many butterfly species, the Upper (Dorsal) and Lower (Ventral) sides of the wings differ in color and/or in pattern (Fig.19).



Fig. 19

Sexual Dimorphism:

In certain butterfly species, Males and Females of the same species exhibit differences in color and/or pattern (Fig.20).



Fig. 20

Seasonal Dimorphism:

In some butterfly species, variations in color and/or pattern occur between the summer and winter generations (Fig.21).



Fig. 21

Polymorphism:

In some Butterfly species, individuals of the same sex exhibit differences in color and/or pattern (Fig. 22).



Two forms of Green Banded Swallowtail.

Fig. 22

Gynandromorphism:

This genetic abnormality, distinctive in certain butterfly species, results in a single butterfly displaying both Male and female features due to faulty cell division, creating a striking visual combination of the two sexes (Fig.23).



Fig. 23

Geographical Dimorphism:

In certain butterfly species, variations in color and/or pattern occur due to their geographical isolation (Fig.24).



Female Great Egg Fly typical all over the World.



Female Great Egg Fly local Variant.

Fig. 24

Nourishment:

Caterpillar Stage:

During the caterpillar stage, their primary food source consists of the leaves, particularly those from their host plant, which they consume in large quantities (Fig. 25).



Fig. 25

Adult Stage:

Butterflies primarily feed on nectar from flowers as their main source of nourishment. Alternatively, some butterflies feed on the pulp of ripe fruits for nourishment (Fig. 26).



Fig. 26

Butterflies often gather on moist soil, sand, or animal dung to absorb moisture rich in salts and essential minerals; this behaviour is known as puddling. (Fig. 27).

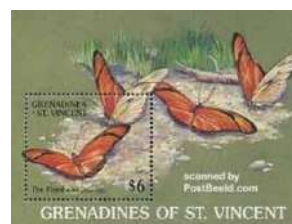


Fig. 27

Predators:

Caterpillar Stage:

Caterpillars are mainly preyed upon by ants, wasps, beetles and birds (Fig. 28).



Fig. 28

Adult Stage:

In their adult stage, butterflies are vulnerable to predators such as birds, spiders, mantises, dragonflies, lizards, frogs and toads (Fig. 29).



Fig. 29

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1. Butterflies of the World by Valerio Sbordoni and Saverio Forestiero.
2. A World for Butterflies by Phil Schappert.
3. Various Web-sites on the Internet.

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POSTAL HISTORY

PIGEONS TO DRONES

An Insight into Carried Covers of Independent India

Senthilkumar Chandrasekaran,
Life Member SIPA

Part - 2

1.3 Ghungroo Tappa (Bell Post) of Hyderabad

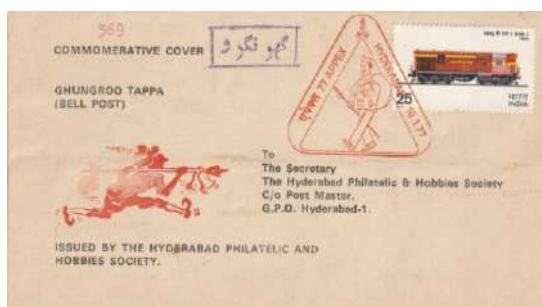
Prior to the introduction of the telegraph in the Nizam's Dominions, Hyderabad employed a specialised system for the rapid transmission of urgent communications known as the Ghungroo Tappa or Bell Post.

Introduced on 4th July 1870, it facilitated the swift delivery of petitions and appeals addressed to the Nizam and senior officials. Messages were carried on foot by designated runners who wore ankle bells (ghungroos), ensuring immediate recognition and priority passage.

The Ghungroo Tappa is distinct from the Harkara Post, which served as a long-distance news and intelligence network for administrative and military purposes, whereas the former was limited to urgent personal appeals.

The system functioned as an early express service within the state administration and remained in operation until 1902, when it was abolished by H.E.H. the Nizam IV following the adoption of modern communication methods.

A philatelic commemoration of the Ghungroo Tappa appeared during APPEX '77, Hyderabad, when the Hyderabad Philatelic & Hobbies Society issued a serially numbered Ghungroo Tappa carried cover on 16th January 1977, symbolically conveyed within the city from the exhibition venue to the General Post Office, Hyderabad.



1.4 Dak Horse

For centuries, the horse was employed as an important means of transmitting urgent communications across the Indian subcontinent. Valued for its speed, endurance, and ability to traverse difficult terrain, mounted conveyance was used to link imperial centres, princely courts, and frontier outposts well before the advent of railways and telegraph systems.

The practice of using mounted couriers can be traced to the Mauryan Empire, whose road network was supported by relay stations facilitating the rapid movement

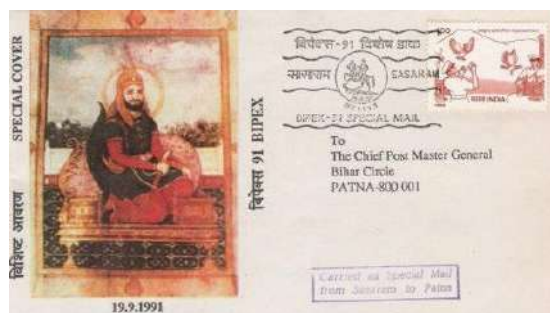
of state dispatches, and was further developed under the Mughal administration through the maintenance of imperial stables.

During British rule, horse couriers continued to be utilised, particularly in regions inaccessible to wheeled transport, for carrying mailbags and emergency consignments. Although their functional role declined after Independence, the tradition has been preserved through philatelic exhibitions and heritage events featuring symbolic horse-carried covers.

On 30th October 1982, a Horse rider carried a special cover from Kanpur GPO to Philcawn-82 Kanpur region philatelic exhibition venue.



On 19th September 1991, a Horse rider carried a special cover from Sasaram to Patna during BIPEX 91, Bihar Philatelic Exhibition.



General Sir Arthur Thomas Cotton, a British military engineer built the Dowleswaram Barrage in Andhra Pradesh. A Special cover was released to commemorate the 175 years since the construction of the Barrage. This cover was carried on horse from Cotton's residence at Bommuru to the barrage site in Dowleswaram, Rajahmundry, celebrating his vital role in construction of the barrage supporting irrigation works.



Shaheed Roshan Singh was an Indian revolutionary who was sentenced in the Bareilly shooting case during the Non-Cooperation Movement of 1921–22.

Although he had not taken part in the Kakori conspiracy of August 1925, he was arrested and sentenced to death. He was executed at Malaka Jail on 19th December 1927.

On 19th December 2018, a special cover was carried through Horse from Malaka to Allahabad HPO.



KERAPEX 2019, Kerala State level Philatelic Exhibition was held at Thiruvananthapuram from 26th to 29th November 2019. As part of the event, on 29th November 2019 a special cover was released on Mahatma Gandhiji's visit to Kowdiar Palace. This cover was carried by mounted police men on horses from Kowdiar to exhibition venue at Thiruvananthapuram.



As part of 125th Birth Anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, a special cover was released on 22nd February 2021 at Puri, Odisha. It was carried on horse from Subhas Chandra Bose Chowk Sub Post office in Puri to Puri Post Office.

A Special Horse carried cover was released to celebrate the 350th Coronation of Chhatrapati Shivaji



Maharaj at Pune on 21st December 2023. This cover was carried from Sinhagad Fort to Pune GPO.



Few of these covers carried by Horse also had coins affixed in the place where images of coins were shown.

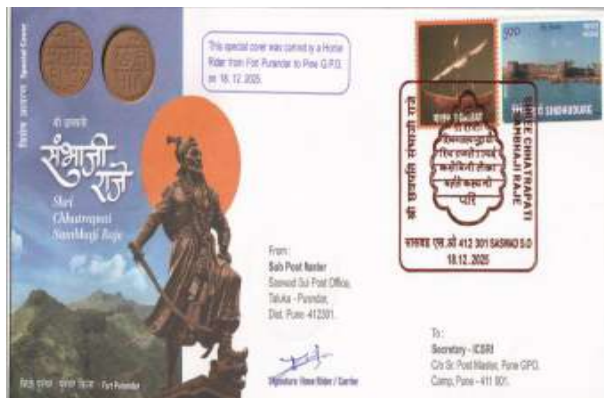


During Coinex Pune 2025, a special cover was released on Shri Chhatrapati Sambhaji Raje on 18th December 2025. This cover was carried on horse from Fort Purandar to Pune GPO. A total 2500 covers were issued at INR 25.





Few of these Covers affixed with original coinage were also issued at COINPEX 2025 priced at INR 720.



1.5 Dak Elephant

Elephants played a specialised yet significant role in India's historic postal transmission network, particularly across the heavily forested and hilly regions. Their immense strength and steady gait enabled them to traverse jungles, rivers and rugged terrain where horses, camels or wheeled carts could not pass.

In several princely states and military zones, elephants were entrusted with urgent dispatches and official communications, becoming indispensable carriers in landscapes where only a powerful and sure-footed animal could safely travel. Though less commonly used than other traditional modes, elephants remained vital wherever the terrain demanded exceptional stability and endurance.

This rich legacy has been commemorated in the modern era through a few remarkable elephant-carried covers. The 7th Inter-School Stamp Exhibition,



SCHOOLPEX 2002, held at St. Xavier's School, Jaipur from 13th –16th September 2002, introduced what was promoted as the world's first Elephant Mobile Post Office Mail, ceremonially carrying post cards from the exhibition venue to the Jaipur GPO.



paid homage not only to the region's Buddhist heritage but also to the enduring symbolic power of the elephant in India's postal and cultural history.



...To be Continued....

PHILA-INFO.5

A STAMP WITH 33 LANGUAGES

In January 1966 Denmark issued two Red Cross Charity Stamps in Latin. The name of the organization was printed in 33 languages, Latin, Danish, French, Icelandic, Dutch, Hindi, Malay, Russian, Thai, Czech, Albanian, Parsi, Polish, Finnish, Arabic, Serbo-Croat, Turkish, Chinese, Spanish, Portuguese, Grelic, German, English, Italian and Swedish are the languages.



PHILATELY EXHIBITIONS : FIELD ISSUES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Philately is a window into history, culture, politics, and art. In India, philately has a long and storied tradition that dates back to the British colonial era. Stamps serve as miniature canvases that capture the essence of India's rich heritage, depicting everything from ancient architecture and wildlife to freedom fighters and scientific achievements. This visual representation of history and culture makes stamps educational tools, providing insights into the country's diverse narrative. Display of philately items in an exhibition goes a long way in developing interest among the common public, especially the youth, to draw them into the field of stamp collecting and exhibiting for a wider reach and appreciation.

Holding of philatelic exhibitions periodically at different levels - District, Region, State, National and International -- was one of the major steps taken by the Department of Posts since Independence. Exhibitions not only gave opportunity for collectors to display their collections and thus steadily improve and upgrade their collections, but they also enabled the public at large, especially children, to view excellent collections. Thus, many prospective and potential collectors got drawn to the hobby.

The First National Philatelic Exhibition was held in New Delhi in March 1948. It was organised by the P&T Department in cooperation with the Indian Institute of Art and Industry. A total of then 121 exhibitors participated, displaying exhibits on 132 times, including stamps of British Colonies, Indian States (Convention and Feudatory) stamps, India Postage stamps and also Afghanistan. Besides, there were two specialised collections of Indian Stamps on King George V and VI.

Successively, several national-level exhibitions were organised at State capitals like Mumbai, Bhubaneswar, Kolkata and Chennai, which draw large viewership. In the recent past, the Department of Posts allotted sufficient funds to the Postal Circles for organising exhibitions at the Circle and District levels as regular events. Besides, some Philatelic societies and Associations also conduct exhibitions with the cooperation of the Department of Posts.

Even though the number of exhibitions conducted every year is on the increase, there is a lack of coordination between the government and private organisations, which affects the smooth and successful conduct of the exhibitions. Above paragraphs revealed the various pitfalls at different levels in organizing philatelic exhibitions in India. A factor that will go a long way in reducing such problems is ensuring in-house capacity and capability building of the postal staff, who is involved in conducting the

exhibitions.

The Department of Posts had issued a Handbook on Philatelic Exhibitions in 1997 and updated it in 2013. This Handbook provides comprehensive guidelines for organizing, exhibiting, and judging philatelic displays, including framework for District, Regional, and Zonal level exhibitions with 50-500+ frames. It also covers regulations, class structures, judging criteria, and exhibitor responsibilities for stamp exhibitions all over India. In many a case the organizers of the exhibition, whether departmental or private associations give scant regard for the regulations, as revealed from issuing the Prospectus to the preparation of Award Certificates. Many err on the 'classification of exhibits' and the 'eligibility for participation'. The rules are tweaked to suit the organizers or the person who develop the Prospectus.

The Malady

Some of the problem areas are allotment of frames to the applicants, arrangement of frames and mounting of exhibits (should start from left to right and not from right to left many organisers fail in this arrangement), positioning of dealer booths and sales counter for the philatelic bureau, proper information on the release of materials and their availability, misjudging the exhibits.

The reasons for such problems seem to be 1) lack of interest on the part of the head of the institution along with the staff involved in each aspect, 2) inadequate supervision, 3) heavy dependence on external agencies and 4) poor knowledge and non-involvement or timely, involvement of responsible persons in deciding important matters.

The Remedy

The only solution for overcoming all these problems lies with the Department and not outside. In the first instance, all divisional heads and the field officials should be imparted proper training on basics of philately starting from philately materials sold by India-Post which shall cover organizing the exhibitions at various levels. Periodical workshops shall be conducted to impart the knowledge on proper appreciation and evaluation of philatelic materials. The curriculum shall be so designed to elevate them from the status of an official onlooker to an exhibitor and an evaluator. If an official wears the hat of a philatelist/exhibitor, then unnecessary and avoidable dependency on outsiders can be minimized.

Hoary Past and Bleak Future

Some popular heads of circles took some initiatives on this but as usual their successors failed to take follow up actions. One CPMG went to the extent of organizing an exhibition exclusively for the serving and retired postal staff. He was the first one to introduce a system of posting philatelically trained postal staff as Guides in each row of the frames in the exhibition hall to

explain the exhibits to the students and visitors. But unfortunately, such initiatives died when the officer retired and the succeeding officers paid very scant regard, thinking perhaps that there are more and more important things to attend to, than philately. For many heads of circles, philately itself is an anathema and many are found boasting that they kept the philatelic activities during their tenure at minimum level. One officer felt proud that during her stint the release of special cover was in single digit in a year and was happy that government money was not "wasted" for such events. There are some exceptions like the Central Region of the Tamil Nadu Circle, an oasis in an arid desert.

Judging the exhibits

Another disturbing factor noticed is about judging the exhibits. Some decades ago in each exhibition organised by the Department as well as by the philatelic associations/societies, there would be a departmental representative in the members of Jury. This facilitated the departmental official to have first-hand information on the evaluation of exhibits based on the FIP norms. For obvious reasons, this practice was discontinued, giving the jurors free rein to judge the exhibits, many a time imposing the organisers wishes also, which leaves much to be desired. When the philatelic associations stopped enlisting the departmental officials in the Jury, the Department turned a Nelson's eye, without realising the implications.

Personal bias and poor knowledge plays havoc

It is a general perception among senior philatelists who silently observe the goings-on that in judging philatelic exhibits, particularly in competitive thematic or postal history classes, they often fall into pitfalls and prioritize personal preferences over the established standards. Judges may unfairly evaluate an exhibit based on their personal bias towards a topic or specialization, rather than adhering to prescribed norms. In many a case they are found conferring highest award to a worthless exhibit and downgrading a worthy one, blatantly exposing their prejudices and succumbing to external pressures. This discloses fundamental flaw in the criteria for selection of Jury at various levels by the Philatelic Congress of India (PCI). The Department also does not evince any interest in ensuring fair evaluation of exhibits even at the national level, despite the fact that the Chairperson of the Jury is the Head of the Circle in the normal course. The retired officers mentioned above used to participate in the jury discussions and examine the awards recommended, before finalizing the results. Now no such thing happens and the Chairpersons sign the papers presented by the Jury exposing their hollowness on the subject.

Decentralization, the need of the hour

The Postal Directorate in its wisdom has introduced a scheme of nominating the Jurors from the PCI's accredited Jury list from the level of District exhibitions. The PCI's list contains three accredited jurors

at National level, nine State level (including three apprentices) and five District level exhibitions. According to the Annual Report for 2024-25 of the Department of Posts, two State level and 31 District level philatelic exhibitions were organized across various postal circles. Each District level exhibition requires at least two accredited jurors. How would it justify managing the work of the Jury with only five accredited Jurors when the norms requires 62. From this, one can visualize the quality of evaluation by the Jurors. This evidently shows the scant regard by the Department in conducting the exhibition and defeats the very purpose of fair evaluation of exhibits. It is imperative to restore the earlier system of nomination of Jurors by the Circles, enlisting the services of the senior officers.

Philatelic Club on Paper

Against the recommendation of the Circle level Philatelic Advisory Committee by the Associations, the Department, has established Philatelic Clubs in 2025, by issuing a circular on 27.03.2025, which still remains a non-runner in many circles. As mandated they are not conducting periodical meetings and even if conducted, minutes are not drawn up then and there and follow up actions not taken, thereby defeating very purpose of its establishment, by none other than Director General of Philately.

As a matter of fact, in one circle, after the inaugural meeting conducted after three months of instructive circular, the whole subject of circle philatelic club' is totally forgotten for the last TWELVE MONTHS is, ONE YEAR.

Awareness Creation and Capacity Building-Long Lasting Solution

The Philately Division of the Circle shall be equipped with adequate staff to handle the philatelic activities, including the conduct of exhibitions, instead of concentrating only on issuing special covers/cancellations and PPCs. The which will bring in money. A list of postal staff who are trained in philately should be prepared and entrusted with the task of organizing the exhibitions, keeping proper liaison with senior philatelists of the Associations/Societies in the Circle. They must equip themselves adequately in handling any matter instead of heavily depending on outside talents. Creation of awareness on philately and building capacity of officials should be a continuous effort and not a one-time affair. In the Annual Performance Report of officers there shall be a column to indicate the knowledge on philately. The Philately division of the Circle should serve as a one-stop resource centre. Recently held district level exhibition at Vellore in Tamil Nadu Circle and the chaotic happenings in the last National Exhibition at Delhi should be an eye opener to the Department. Everyone expects that the authorities must wake up from the deep slumber to turn a new page in the history of Indian Philately and forlorn been with malice towards none and with deep anguish, the above article has been written by a collector and official.

SECURITY COMES WITH A STAMP

Visits to the Smithsonian National Postal Museum

Dr. M.R.RAMESH KUMAR,
Life Member, S.I.P.A.

The Smithsonian National Postal Museum is one of its kind in the world, and is located in one of the most beautiful locations in the Washington DC, USA.

Author at the Postal Museum

There are several sections, attractions, galleries at different levels including the basement, level 1 and level 2 and several highlighted and interesting things and excellent Museum Shop with lots of Philatelic materials too. Also next to the Philatelic Museum there is a USPS which is open on all the days except when the Museum is closed. There is a free guided tour of this Postal Museum in most of the days, which I enjoyed during my first visit to the Postal Museum on 21st November, 2025. Today, during my second visit (7th December), I will focus on one such interesting topic, which attracted my attention, Mail related criminal activities.

Some relevant things about the National Postal Museum: Actually it is a fun place to visit, with the whole family from kids to the senior citizens, there is something for each and every person according to their taste and liking too.

FUN ACTIVITIES :

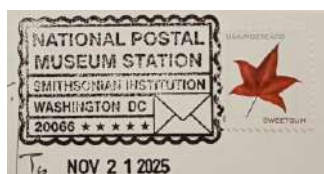
a) Creating your stamp design featuring your photo. A stamp design featuring my own photo made at the National Postal Museum and emailed to me.

b) Make a stamp collection in the interactive display "Connecting with the US Stamps" exhibition. I collected 10 stamps mostly on the theme, Summer Olympics of USA, and emailed to me. This is an image of the same. They then ask us to collect them physically from the various sources. They were displaying US stamps from 1947 onwards.

c) Write a Postcard to someone anywhere in the world. They had kept two different varieties of Picture Postcards to be sent to anyone in the world. These postcards are free, I chose a Ship one, being an Oceanographer.

A special cancellation of the National Postal Museum which was posted to self on 21st November, 2025, which I received a couple of days later.

d) Design your own Postcard and stamp.



Also there was another area, where you can design your own Postcard, with a stamp of your liking and the address you can put and you can also give a feedback to the National Postal Museum etc. A good fun activity for the kids and seniors alike.

I also gave away a copy of the SIPA Primer, which I feel is one of the best book to the budding philatelists to start with, giving lots of valuable information ...etc to a young philatelist at the National Postal Museum, Washington DC, USA.



WILLIAM H GROSSER GALLERY

This is one of the largest stamp collections gallery within the National Postal Museum. This gallery has several collections, including Gems of American stamps, World of Stamps, Mail Marks History, connect with US Stamps, National Stamp Salon, Stamps around the Globe, Postmasters Gallery ..etc

A photo with different types of Post boxes.

Also attended a free guided tour within the National Postal Museum which was very well conducted by one of the staff members of the Museum, in appreciation of his efforts, which was almost for an hour, I gave a copy of my Philatelic book to him.

Some of the most important **POSTAL RELATED CRIME ACTIVITIES** include

- a) Mail Fraud
- b) Assaults and Threats on Postal Employees
- c) Mail Theft
- d) Post Office Robberies and Burglaries
- e) Identity Theft
- f) Counterfeit Money Orders and Stamps
- g) Child Exploitation Through the Mail
- h) Mail Containing Dangerous Materials
- i) Drug Trafficking

In fact, most of the things are happening all over the world, including our own country, one important which called my special attention was the item number **h) which was Mail containing Dangerous Materials**

I visited this section during my second visit on 7th December, 2025.

According to their own (United States Postal Services) statistics exhibited at the Museum, each year the USPS Postal Inspectors a) Handle about 1,15,000 reports of suspected frauds b) Arrest about 3000 people for mail theft c) Investigate about 200 Robberies & Burglaries of Post offices d) Arrest 1,500 people for Mail Fraud e) Arrest 2500 people for money laundering through the mail.

In the present article of mine, I would like to focus on a Investigation called Amerithrax. The anthrax attacks and subsequent copycat attacks, hoaxes - led a worldwide paranoia. People feared poison would enter their homes in an innocent looking envelope. In response. the US Postal inspection service joined hands with Federal Bureau of

Investigation (FBI) to create AMERITHRAX TASK FORCE. This special team led a complex investigation into anthrax attacks. The team involved microbiologists, chemistry and bio-weapon specialists from government, university and commercial laboratories.

The 2001 anthrax attacks were a series of bioterrorism incidents in the US following 9/11 attack, where letters containing *Bacillus anthracis* spores were mailed to media outlets and US senators, killing 5 people and sickening 17 others. The attacks which occurred in the fall of 2001, led to widespread panic, massive health responses, and one of the most complex investigations in the FBI history code-named "Amerithrax". The investigation concluded that a government scientist, Dr Bruce Ivins, was responsible, though he died before charges could be filed.

Over the course of the nine year investigation, the members of the Amerithrax Team Issued 5750 Grand Jury Subpoenas which included 50 US Postal Inspection Service Personnel a) interviewed 10,000 witnesses spread on 6 continents b) recovered 6,000 pieces of potential evidence c) Scrutinised over 1000 potential suspects d) Gathered 5,730 Environmental samples from 60 locations.

The case was closed in 2010 with the conclusion that the culprit had committed suicide in 2008. Since 2001, BIOHAZARD Detection equipment monitors the air in large mail sorting facilities.

About the Author :

Chief Scientist (Retd) National Institute of Oceanography, Dona Paula, Goa. A real super active ambassador for philately. Lifetime awardee of SIPA in 2026.

* * * * *

MEMBERS

FREE ADVERTISEMENTS.

1. Surplus stamps etc. etc. available. To fill in gaps and to start a collection. SIPA members may Contact 9790852951 (MT. Karunakaran)

2. **Sale** : Middle level 2/3 frame exhibits on Ships, Olympics, Russia, Papua New Guinea, Pollution, Roses etc. With additional materials can be expanded well in line to medals. Contact 9940681750.

3. **Sale** : Few Hundreds of stamps and covers on birds, ships, trains, bicycles, postage due etc. Can be made into award winning exhibits. Contact. Ms.Caroline, 9710412073.

4. **Sale** : Censored covers I & II WW. and unit censor. more than 120nos. Can be made into a grand 5 frame exhibit. Contact : Rolands Nelson, 9940681750

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2025 POSTCROSSING MEET-UPS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

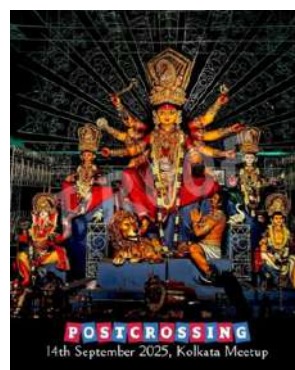
Ms.Kaviya Shree.S.V,
Chennai

In a world driven by instant messages and disappearing texts, the simple act of sending a postcard feels almost revolutionary. Yet in 2025, thousands across India chose to slow down, pick up a pen and connect through handwritten words. What began as an online exchange through Postcrossing has grown into a living, breathing community one that now meets face to face.

As Postcrossing celebrated its 20th year, India saw a remarkable rise in meet-ups, where strangers became friends over stacks of postcards, stamps, and stories.



20th Postcrossing Anniversary Meet-up card in Chennai.
(P.C - Postally Hut Cards)

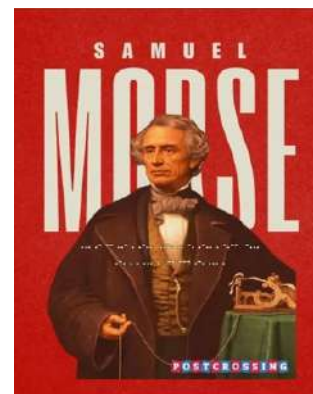


Meet-up Card from Kolkata
(P.C - Postcrossing website)

The year opened with an unusual level of activity. with regular gatherings throughout the year, from January through December. In Chennai, the first meet-up of February set the tone for a year of thematic gatherings, including one dedicated to Samuel Morse, the pioneer of telecommunication.

As the months progressed, Postcrossing communities began to strengthen regionally. In Tamil Nadu,

Chennai emerged as a recurring hub, hosting multiple events throughout the year, including celebrations tied to Madras Day and World Postcard Day. The state's participation extended beyond the capital, with Tiruchirapalli hosting a jamboree-themed meet-up and Sivakasi organizing a district-level gathering evidence of growing decentralization In Karnataka, Bengaluru brought a distinctive flavour to Postcrossing culture.



Samuel Morse Meet-up card from Chennai.
(P.C - Postally Hut Cards)

Meet-ups here were not confined to routine exchanges but often carried unique themes. One gathering took place at the National Military Museum, blending postal history with national heritage, while another embraced pop culture through a Harry Potter-themed postcard session. Later in the year, the city hosted events linked to World Postcard Day and BengalurupeX, reinforcing its role as both a creative and philatelic hub. Meanwhile, Jaipur in Rajasthan adopted a different approach integrating Postcrossing with cultural and environmental observances. Meet-ups were organized around World Earth Day, Holi, World Health Day, Friendship Day, and World Environment Day, turning postcard writing into a medium for civic and cultural expression.

Central India also played a significant role, with Indore hosting a series of thoughtfully curated meet-ups. These ranged from regular gatherings to commemorative events such as a tribute to Rani Ahilyabai Holkar. Nearby, Sanchi offered a unique intersection of heritage and hobby, where participants combined postcard exchange with the study of the historic Sanchi Stupa. If there was a defining thread running through 2025, it was the celebration of Postcrossing's twentieth anniversary. July became a focal point, with cities across India organizing special meet-ups to mark the occasion. In Kochi, Ahmedabad, Dehradun, Delhi, and Kolkata, postcrossers gathered in large numbers to commemorate two decades of global connection. For Ahmedabad and some other cities, these anniversary events also marked their first-ever meet-ups, symbolizing both celebration and expansion.

In Chennai, Madras Day provided an opportunity to celebrate local identity through postcards, while in Bengaluru, themed events ranging from homely informal gatherings to pop culture inspired sessions demonstrated the flexibility of the format. These culturally embedded meet-ups reveal how Postcrossing in India is not merely imported as a global hobby but actively localized, adapting to regional traditions and social contexts.

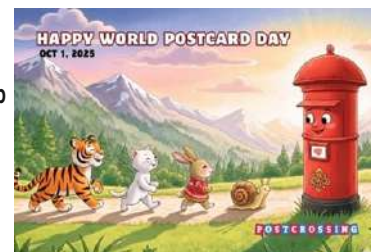


Madras day meet-up card, held at Chennai (P.C - Postally Hut Cards)

Another major highlight of the year was World Postcard Day, which acted as a synchronizing event for Postcrossing communities across India. Cities including Chennai, Bengaluru, Indore, Mumbai, Dehradun, and Ahmedabad organized meet-ups around October 1.

These events often combined postcard writing with public engagement awareness campaigns, group writing sessions, and collaborations with local communities helped introduce newcomers to Postcrossing. In Dehradun, for

World Postcard Day Meet-up
Card from Chennai.
(P.C - Postally Hut Cards)



instance, the meet-up explicitly focused on spreading awareness alongside celebration, reflecting a growing emphasis on outreach. One of the most striking aspects of Postcrossing meet-ups in 2025 was their ability to integrate with cultural and seasonal events. In Jaipur, Holi celebrations were paired with postcard exchanges, blending colour and creativity. Friendship Day meet-ups emphasized interpersonal bonds, while Christmas gatherings in Kolkata brought a festive close to the year.



Christmas Meet-up
Card from Kolkata.
(P.C - Postcrossing Website)

Perhaps the most significant development in 2025 was the emergence of new Postcrossing communities. Cities like Ahmedabad, Gorakhpur, and regions associated with large gatherings such as the Mahakumbh saw their first meet-ups. These events mark an important shift from concentrated urban clusters to a more distributed national network.

The Postcrossing meet-ups of 2025 illustrate how a simple idea can evolve into a powerful social practice. Across India, from Kolkata's consistent gatherings to Jaipur's thematic innovations and Bengaluru's creative experiments, each city contributed to a larger narrative of connection and community. More than just events, these meet-ups represent a reimagining of communication itself. They remind us that even in a digital age, the act of writing, sending, and receiving a postcard retains a unique emotional resonance. As Postcrossing moves into its third decade, the energy and diversity of India's meet-ups suggest that this movement is far from fading. Instead, it is expanding quietly, steadily, and meaningfully one postcard, one city, and one gathering at a time.

About the Author :

Research Scholar, Department of Journalism and Communication, University of Madras, working under Dr.Jai Sakthivel on 'Post' related topic. for Ph.D.



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DEAD COUNTRY SERIES

EPISODE - 1

AN ISLAND - A DEAD COUNTRY

DEAD COUNTRY :

A country, a land or a postal entity which has stopped issuing stamps with its name is being called a “**DEAD COUNTRY**” by stamp collectors all over the world.

For a normal and regular commemorative stamp issuing country to become a dead country, reasons are many.

- (i) Change of Name of Country.
- (ii) Change of Political System - Monarchy to Democracy.
- (iii) One country breaking up into many countries.
- (iv) Unification with adjacent countries.
- (v) Change of Ruler.
- (vi) Administrative arrangement within the country.

Adopting the last reason mentioned above, a land area, in other words an island which was once a **French Colony** was changed as an integral part of the French Republic as an **Overseas Dept. of France**.

This change brought the issues with the name of the island to a close and adopted the stamps of France for postal service.

Thus comes the Dead Country - **REUNION**

REUNION is a tiny volcanic island in the midst of the Indian Ocean. This island was called "THE BOURBON" earlier. At the time of French revolution (in 1793) the name was changed from 'Ile Bourbon' to Reunion.



STATISTICS :

Area	: 2510 Km ² .
Capital	: Saint Denis
Population	: 9,10,985 as of Jan 2026.
Currency	: Euro. Earlier Franc = 100 centimes
Language	: French and Reunion Creole
Life expectancy	: Male 79 years : Female 85 years

About a quarter of the population are of French origin. Major part of other population is by descendants of workers brought from India (who retain their Hindu Culture) to work in the plantations, sugar farms and East Africans.

GEOGRAPHY :

It is a Tourist's Paradise having one active and nine dormant volcanoes. It features stunning tropical forests,

white sand beaches and trekking inducing hills and valleys. There are two mountains with peaks above 3000m (10,000ft)



LOCATION :

Reunion lies about 680 kms. east of the island of MADAGASCAR and about 175 kms. south west of MAURITIUS, the nearest island.

HISTORY :

- 1512 - Portuguese discovered Mascarene archipelago which included Reunion, Mauritius and Rodrigues islands.
- 1642 - Officially claimed by Jacques Pronis of France.
- 1665 - French East India Company slaves from East Africa to work in the coffee plantations.
- 1810 - During the Napoleonic wars the island areas were lost to the British and then by the Treaty of Paris returned to the French in 1815. (only five years)
- 1840 - With the abolition of slavery, indentured labourers were imported from South India and East Africa.
- 1870 - Opening of Suez canal shifted commercial traffic from the region leading to an economic downturn.
- 1940 - Reunion changes itself from a French Colony to an Overseas Dept. of France.
- 1974 - The island gained the status of French region. Headquarters of French military in the Indian Ocean was established. As of now, Reunion is an integral part of French Republic.

STAMPS & PHILATELY :

First stamps of Reunion were issued on 1st Jan 1852. (12 years after the first adhesive postage stamp Penny Black and in the year of our Scind Dawk)

- 1892 - after 1885 and 1891, Reunion post copied French colony issues.
 - A long set (18 Nos) was issued in 'Tablets' key type inscribed "REUNION"



- 1894 - French colonies surcharged stamps, perforated.
- 1907 - A long set of 39 pictorial stamps showing map of Reunion, views of St. Denis and view of St. Pierre, the harbour.



- 1912 - Issues of 1892 - 1901 were surcharged and issued.
- 1915 - Red cross stamps of 1907 were surcharged and issued. 10 → + 5c big.
- 1916 - 10 → + 5c small.
- 1931 - "Colonial Exhibition" Paris 4V. Key types. Insc. "Reunion" 40 c, 50 c, 90 c, F50.
- 1933 - A long set of 41 stamps having waterfalls/cascade salazie; Anchain peak, Salazie; Leon Dierx museum.



- 1937 - Air mail stamps ; pioneer flight. Reunion to France ovpt. Reunion - France par avion "Roland Garros".



- 1943 - Free French issue. 14 stamp set-Chief products.



- 1947 - A new set of 22 stamps were issued with four new designs in values of 10c to 200F.

Postage due Stamps.



From 1949, stamps of France with surcharge were used for postal service in the island of Reunion.

- Rolands Nelson

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OBITUARY

Dr. K.C.SIVANANDAN

(1935-2026) - Life Member, S.I.P.A.



With saddened heart, SIPA wants to inform the expiry of Mr.K.C.SIVANANDAN, Retd., Chief Commercial Manager, Chennai Division. Southern Railway on 27th Jan 2026.

He was one of the flag bearers of SIPA following the leadership Mr.G.Balakrishna Das (One of the five founders of SIPA) and his elder brother Mr.G.Madan Mohan Das during the decades of 1970, 1980 and 1990.

He was a passionate collector on the theme of 'Railways' which he chose because of his career and built a competitive award winning exhibit on that theme.

As an individual, he was a friendly gentlemen to the core .
May his soul 'Rest in Peace'

* * * * *

PHILA-INFO.6

PORTO RICO was a Spanish colony until 1898 when Spain ceded it to the U.S.A. Until that time Spain issued almost 200 stamps which can be seen in every U.S. collection as fore runners of a U.S. possession. The scarest stamp is the 50c centimes with the portrait of King Alphonse XIII in yellow green issued in 1890. Well centered mint copies are very difficult to obtain and are easily worth a few hundred dollars now.

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HELP US KINDLY



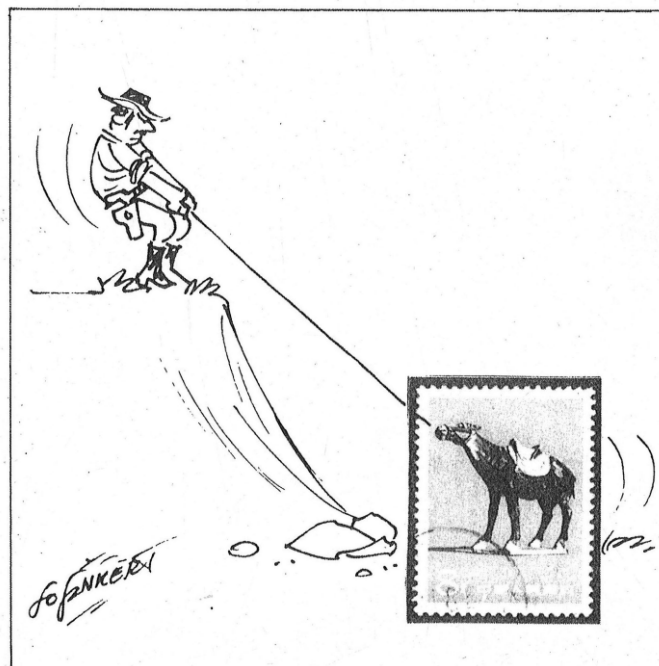
Issued in 2025



What is this?

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STAMPTOON No.4



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