



THE FILA CAPSULE

A Bi-monthly *EIPA* Bulletin

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Bimonthly

Recent trends in Philately

“How many stamps you have?” This was a question put to me by a media person of local TV channel and a local news paper during the 1st District level Philatelic Exhibition ANGULPEX-07 held at Community centre, Nalconagar, Angul on 24-25, February, 2007. I was trying to explain them that it is not a question of number of stamps in collection, it is the time to know in which specialised theme or of which specific country a philatelist is having his collection. Philatelists and stamp collectors are two different sides of a coin. Both are lovers of stamps but they are in a parallel line. A stamp collector collects stamps which he likes or attracts him irrespective of its theme or country and puts them in his stock book. He gets pleasure when he glares through the beautiful stamps at the time of leisure. On the other hand a philatelist collects not only stamps, but also philatelic material like postal stationery, meter-frankings, counter printed levels, fiscals, cindrellas, etc. related to his theme or country, studies them and preserves them for the purpose of display in any philatelic exhibition. A philatelist gains knowledge from the stamps and philatelic materials about different countries, their currencies, culture, science & technologies, personalities, history, nature, flora and fauna, geography, etc. I was saying very easily as if a teacher trying to make the students understand the features of philately, but felt that it was little hard for them to understand. I took them around the exhibition, explained about a thematic collection displayed in the hall as how chronological the events or topics a exhibitor is exhibiting in his collection and how marks are awarded as per the prescribed guidelines, then only they could understand to my satisfaction. Their idea on types of stamps, manner of preservation, techniques of presentation in an exhibition was changed. During the exhibition a philately workshop was also organised in which amazingly not only school students, but also persons of all category including senior citizens also attended the workshop

and put several questions on philately. Some of the persons did not had any idea on the scented stamps. When they smell the 1st scented sandal and rose stamps of India, they were astonished. Most of the persons had also no idea on black listed or undesirable issue stamps.

The most interesting part of the exhibition was on the concluding day's cultural programme. A three year old student performed a beautiful Orissi dance programme which has spell bound every body. After her programme the Director, Postal Services, Sambalpur presented a gift to her as a token of recognition of her outstanding performance, but keeping every body stunned, she threw the gift and demanded a special cover of the exhibition. Her demand was immediately full filled. But again she threw the cover and started crying aloud. We were unable to know as to why she is crying, when her favorite cover has been given to her. But the dilemma in this matter was still very interesting. She was demanding a special cover having affixed with a scented Rose stamp, which she has seen during the exhibition while she was going around the hall in the Philately counter. The earlier cover given to her did not have the stamp for which she threw the cover. Isn't it interesting ! Definitely, it is the most interesting and memorable part of the exhibition, where I find hardly any matured and experienced philatelist, but the small girl has stolen the show.

Though delayed, Department of Posts, Govt. of India has taken the right step to introduce the scented stamps first on Sandalwood and then on Roses. Several countries has already issued such stamps long time back. It is now high time to consider the Department of Posts for issue of odd shaped stamps, no value indicator stamps, personalised stamps, self adhesive stamps, coil stamps and other fascinating stamps which will obviously attract a common people, what to say about a philatelist and Government will also earn more revenue from this items.

Editor

BIMAL ROY



The name of Bimal Roy is one well known and loved among film lovers, and is synonymous with good cinema. Rooted in reality, his cinematic masterpieces like 'Udayer Pathey' (Bengali), 'Do Bigha Zameen', 'Devdas' and 'Bandini' (Hindi) portray life

with a rare sensitivity and a distinctive poetic sensibility.

Born into an affluent landowning family, the seventh of nine children of Smt. Kironmoyee and Shri Hem Chandra Roy, in village Suapur, a suburb of Dhaka, in erstwhile East Bengal, Bimal Roy was educated at Dhaka's famous Jaggannath College.

He joined the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) and made the astonishingly assured, bravely path-breaking film, 'Udayer Pathey'. The film celebrated a principled fight against exploitation and was inspirational for a young and restless generation searching for a cause, among them Satyajit Ray, Ritwik Ghatak, and Mrinal Sen. The film was remade by him in Hindi as 'Humrahi', and was to become a clarion call of the progressive movement. Migrating to Bombay in 1950, at the invitation of Bombay Talkies, Roy went on to make some of his most memorable films under its banner. Among these was 'Do Bigha Zameen', which shows the plight of Shambhu Mahato, uprooted from his patch of land to swell the ranks of the migrant labourers in Kolkata. In his making of 'Devdas', Roy remained faithful to the spirit and text of the great literary classic.

Bimal Roy died in 1966. But his legacy lives on, through his cinema.

Credits:

Text: Based on material written by Smt. Maithali Rao

Stamp & FDC: Bharati Mirchandani

Cancellation: Alka Sharma

TECHNICAL DATA

Date of Issue: 08.01.2007

Denomination: 500 p

Stamps Printed: 0.4 Million

Printing Process: Wet-offset

Printer: Security Printing Press, Hyderabad

TAMIL NADU CRICKET ASSOCIATION



The Tamil Nadu Cricket Association was established in 1930 for promoting and popularizing the game of cricket in the State. The Tamil Nadu Cricket

Association was also among the founder units of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), and has played a significant role in shaping the objectives and activities of the Board over the last five decades.

The Tamil Nadu Cricket Association has helped nurture promising young talent and build up many cricket players of repute, who have subsequently gone on to represent India. Among them mention must be made of C. Ramasamy, M.J. Gopalan, C. R. Rangachary, A.G. Kripal Singh, S. Venkataraghavan, V.V. Kumar, Bharath Reddy, Robin Singh, K. Srikkant, L. Sivaramakrishnan, W.V. Raman, S. Ramesh and Hemang K. Badani. As we know, Shri S.Venkataraghavan and Shri K. Srikkanth also had the honour of captaining the India Cricket team.

Since its inception, the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association has had the privilege of hosting 37 Tests and 10 One Day International Cricket Matches. The construction of the magnificent M.A. Chidambaram Stadium at Chepauk also marks a landmark in its history. The first One Day International played under floodlights in Chepauk was between New Zealand and Australia in 1996. Further, in July 2005, the Executive Committee of the TNCA approved the establishment of a TNCA Cricket Academy.

Credits:

Text: Based on material provided by the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association.

Stamp & F.D.C.: Brahm Prakash

Cancellation: Nenu Gupta

TECHNICAL DATA

Date of Issue: 26.01.2007

Denomination: 500p

Stamps Printed: 0.4 Million

Printing Process: Wet-offset

FRAGRANCE OF ROSES

The rose is a flowering shrub of the genus "Rosa" estimated to be more than 30 million years old.

Roses are distributed in the north temperate, and the sub tropical parts of both the hemispheres and there are more than a hundred species of wild roses. As far as the garden roses of the world are concerned, only eight species, namely *Rosa chinensis*, *Rosa damascena*, *Rosa foetida*, *Rosa gallica*, *Rosa gigantea*, *Rosa moschata*, *Rosa multiflora* and *Rosa wichuraiana* have played an important role.

In India several rose species are found growing wild, mostly in the Himalayan ranges. The first Prime Minister of India the late Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, a much-loved person, always wore a red rose in his buttonhole.

India Post has brought together fragrance and beauty to create a set of four stamps on 'Fragrance of Roses' depicting four Indian varieties.



Bhim

This hybrid tea rose is very famous in India. The camellia-like flatness of its form is unusual and its mid-red colour is very attractive. A healthy bush, very free with its flowers it has dark semi-glossy foliage. The fully open blooms are striking and stands up to cold nights.



Delhi Princess

A popular Indian-bred variety this rose has cerise-red buds which open to sparkling pink flowers in clusters. Growing in great profusion, the clusters may be small in cool weather, but the individual flowers are 10cm across. In warm weather large trusses are formed. It is exceptionally vigorous and free-flowering in all weathers.



Jawahar

Free-flowering and good for bedding and exhibition, the velvety, scented 'Jawahar' is a creation of the Indian Department of Crops and Agriculture. Introduced in 1980, its blooms are large and high centred, Growing usually in clusters of three to six; the flowers are perfect creamy white. The vigorous, bushy plant is notable for strange brown prickles and light green flossy foliage.

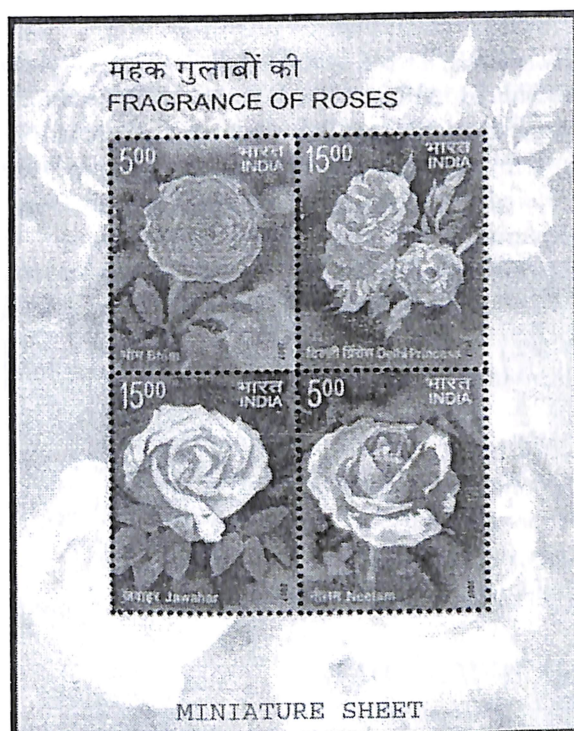


Neelam

The Indian Agricultural Research Institute has for some years now been breeding roses especially for Indian conditions, and the gardens of the Indian Rose Society in Delhi display some splendid roses as a result including the 'Neelam'. It is a large, shapely bloom in silvery pink, with a heady perfume and dark green, glossy foliage.

Credits:

Text: Based on 'The Rose in India' by Dr. B.P.Pal, and 'The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Roses' by Mr. Stirling Macoboy
Stamp & FDC: Suresh Kumar
Cancellation: Alka Sharma



TECHNICAL DATA

Date of Issue: 07.02.2007
Denomination: 500, 1500, 1500, 500p
Stamps Printed: 0.8 Million each
Miniature sheets: 0.4 Million
Printing Process: Photogravure
Printer: India Security Press, Nasik

MANOHARBHAI PATEL

Shri Manoharbai Patel was born in Nadiad, Gujarat to a poor farmer's family on 9th February, 1906. He was unable to pursue his education beyond standard IV due to financial inability of his parents. He moved to Jabalpur at the age of 15 in search of a better future and started working in a bidi factory, primarily loading and unloading tobacco bags.



With no formal education himself, Shri Manoharbai Patel thought of furthering education when he felt that a time had come to give something back to the society. With that intention he started the Gondia Education Society and, on one single day,

he started 22 High Schools and a Degree College in a district, which did not have even one High School till then.

In course of the struggle for India's freedom Shri Manoharbai Patel came in contact with stalwarts like Mahatma Gandhi, Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, Shri Vallabh Bhai Patel, Shri Jaiprakash Narayan and others, he also came to be a close associate of leaders like Smt. Indira Gandhi, Shri Morarji Desai, Shri Y.B. Chavan and Shri Babubhai Patel. He became a Member of the first Legislative Assembly in 1952, in the erstwhile State of C.P. and Berar. In tribute to his commitment and contribution towards various development projects, the Government of Maharashtra named one of the major irrigation projects of the Vidarbha region in Maharashtra as Manohar Sagar.

Shri Manoharbai Patel died on 17th August, 1970.

Credits:

Text: Based on material provided by the Proponent

Stamp & FDC: Brahm Prakash

Cancellation: Alka Sharma

TECHNICAL DATA

Date of Issue: 09-02-2007

Denomination: 500 p

Stamps Printed: 0.4 Million

Printing Process: Photogravuer

Printer: India Security Press, Nasik

FAIRS OF INDIA

The **Goa Carnival** is one of the most famous of these, a three-day riotous festival of music and dance, laughter and fun. The origin of this celebration can be traced back to the early years



of Portuguese colonization of the state and, over the years, the carnival has emerged as an intrinsic part of the Goan cultural scene. Held in mid-February, every year, the three-day extravaganza starts with a mammoth procession of floats, of a variegated pageantry of colour and gaiety, headed by King Momo on the evening of 'Fat Saturday'.

At the other end the **Pushkar mela**, held annually



during the Hindu month of Kartika (October-November), this is one of the largest

cattle fairs in the world. Though dealing primarily with camels, a lot of other cattle such as horses, donkeys, bulls etc. are also bought and sold, after being beautified, raced, and paraded on the sands this small lake-side town, near Ajmer in Rajasthan. Camping in tents outside the town, the rural folk congregate to take a holy dip in the sacred lake next to the temple consecrated to Lord Brahma, the only one of its kind in the world.

The **Sonepur fair** in Bihar is also supposed to be



one of Asia's largest cattle fairs specializing in the sale of elephants. Sonepur has been a center

for the animal trade since the fourth century B.C. Chandragupta Maurya, the great Indian emperor who ruled the country from Pataliputra (now Patna) in those days is said to have bought elephants and horses for his army from Sonepur. A holy bath at the confluence of the holy rivers, and a visit to the Hariharnath temple situated here are the other attractions that draw thousands of devotees here on the Kartika Purnima day.

The **Baul festivals** of West Bengal provide a study



in contrast. Their itinerant life-style, religious philosophy, poetical compositions,

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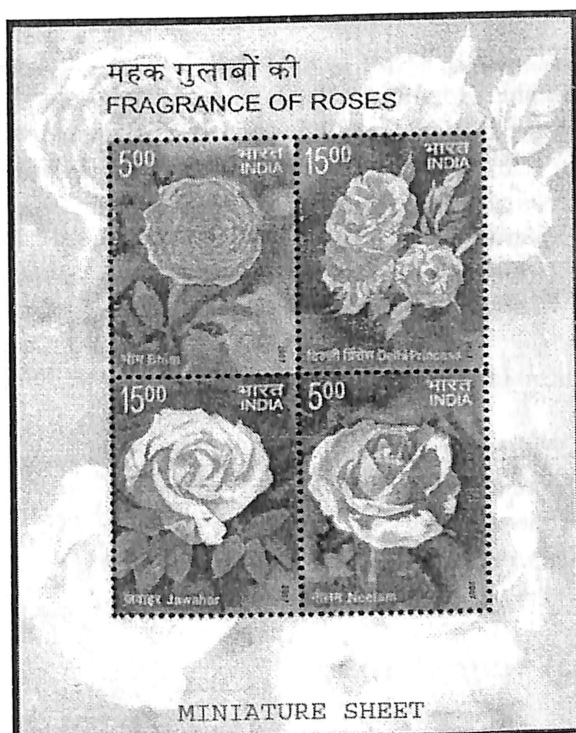
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and musical style was brought into prominence through the writings of Rabindranath Tagore. The Bauls have been using the melas or fairs since time immemorial, to spread their message of universal brotherhood and love among the rural people. While a number of such melas are held in different parts of Birbhum District of West Bengal throughout the year, the two best-known ones are the Jaydeva-Kenduli Mela, and the Paus Mela at Santiniketan.

Credits:

Stamp & FDC: Kamleshwar Singh

Cancellation: Alka Sharma



TECHNICAL DATA

Date of Issue: 27.02.2007

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Stamps Printed: 0.8 Million each

Miniature Sheet: 0.4 Million

Printing Process: Wet-offset

Printer: Security Printing Press, Hyderabad

PHILATELIC EXHIBITIONS

**INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS
EFIRO 2008**

The world Philatelic Exhibition EFIRO-2008 will be held at Bucharest, Romania, 20-28, June, 2008. Shri Sahadeva Sahoo, Ex-President of Philatelic Congress of India has been appointed as the National Commissioner for the exhibition. The last date of submission of applications to the Commissioner General was 31st January, 2007. The details can be had from the Commissioner EFIRO 2008, Sh. Sahadeva Sahoo, D-3, BJB Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751014, Tel.0674-2432251, E-mail-sahadevas@yahoo.com or the official website "www.efiro2008.ro" may be referred to.

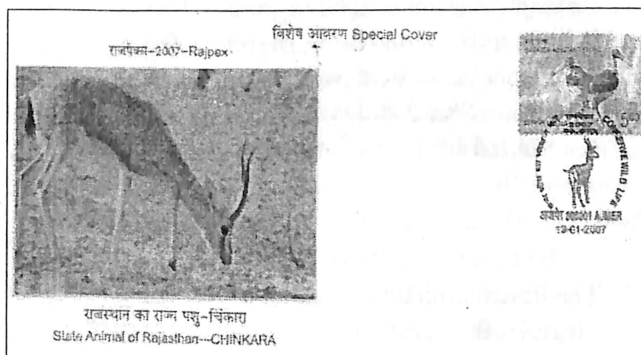
PRAGA 2008

The world Stamp Exhibition PRAGA 2008 will be held at Prague Exhibition Grounds, Holesovice,

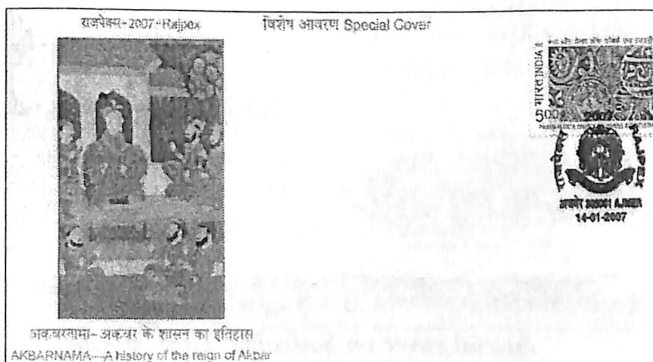
Prague (Zech Republic) on 12-14, Sept, 2008. The competitive class is limited to Traditional, Postal History, one frame Exhibit and Philatelic Literature only. Dr. R.S.Gandhi of Philatelic Congress of India has been appointed as the National Commissioner for the exhibition. The last date of submission of applications to the Commissioner is 15th July, 2007. The application forms can be had from the Commissioner PRAGA 2008 Dr. R.S.Gandhi, Road # 1E, Rajendra Nagar, Patna-800016, Tel-0612 3292003, Mobile-09835285003, e mail-gandhipatna@hotmail.com. For details the official website "www.praga2008.cz" may be referred to.

**STATE LEVEL EXHIBITIONS
RAJPEX-2007**

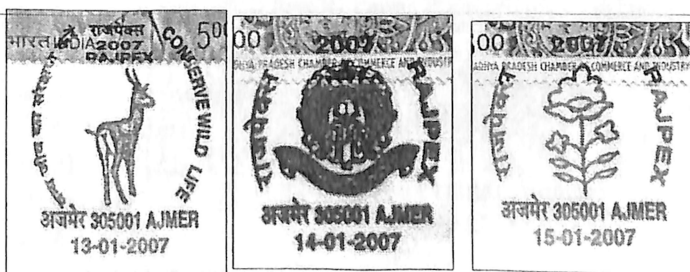
The 11th state level Philatelic Exhibition of the Rajasthan State was held at Indoor Stadium, Patel Maidan, Ajmer from 13-15, January, 2007. Exhibits in 375 frames were on display in different competitive and non competitive groups. Three special covers were also released during the exhibition.

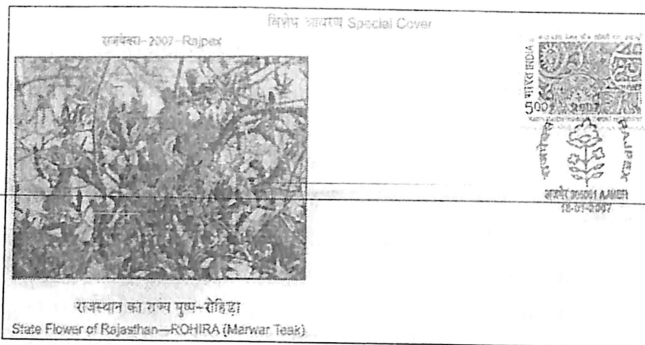


Special cover on State Animal of Rajasthan-Chinkara

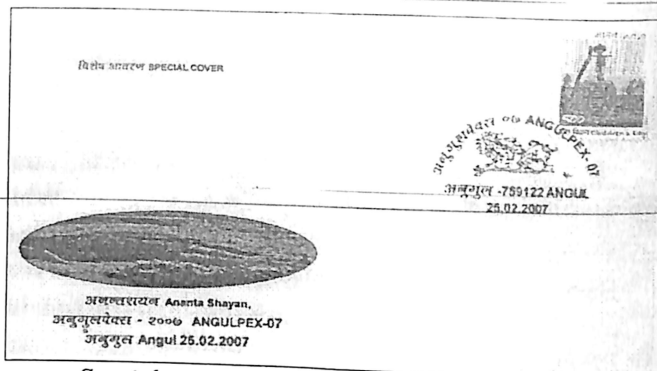


Special cover on Akbarnama- A History of the reign of Akbar





Special cover on State Flowers of Rajasthan-Rohira



Special cover on Ananta Sayan (Lord Vishnu)

DISTRICT LEVEL EXHIBITIONS

SILVERPEX-2007

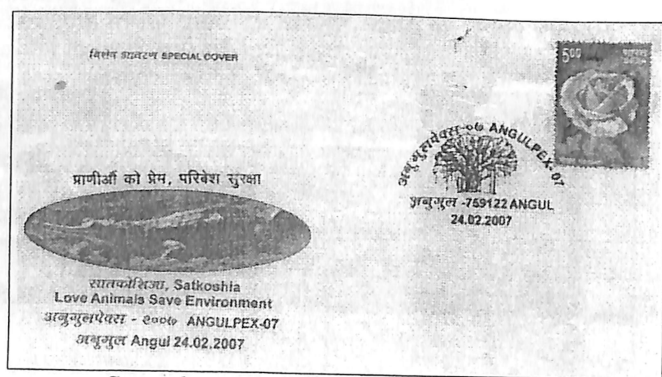
The 1st District level philatelic exhibition of the undivided Cuttack district has been postponed to 16-18, March, 2007 due to some administrative grounds. Shri B.K. Sinha of EIPA has been nominated to act as Jury to evaluate the exhibits during the exhibition.

BALANGIRPEX-07

The second district level philatelic exhibition of the Balangir district will be organised by the Balangir Postal Division on 16-17, March, 2007 at Balangir. Two special covers will be released during the exhibition. Shri A.K. Dash, Secretary, EIPA has been nominated to act as Jury to evaluate the exhibits during the exhibition.

ANGULPEX-07

The first district level philatelic Exhibition of Angul district was held at Nalco Community Centre, Nalco



Special cover on Satkoshia 'Love animals-save environment'



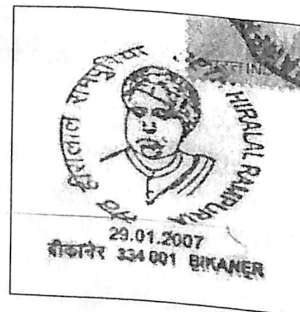
Nagar, Angul on 24-25, February 2007. The exhibition was inaugurated by Sh. A.N. Nanda, Post Master General, Sambalpur and



Berhampur. Shri Ajit Kumar Dash, Secretary EIPA was appointed as Jury for the exhibition. 16 exhibitors have displayed their exhibits

in 29 frames in the competitive group. Besides 3 exhibits in 11 frames were displayed in invitee group. Two special covers were released during the exhibition. One cover on "Satkoshia" and another cover on "Ananta Shayan" were released. 6 Silver medals, 2 Silver Bronze medal, 5 Bronze medals and one Diploma were awarded to the deserving competitors. Smt Nirupama Mohanty in the senior group and Sh. Subhasis Patnaik in the youth group were awarded the best exhibit awards in the respective groups. Sh. R.N Jena, General Manager (Smelter), NALCO distributed awards and prizes to the participants. A philately workshop was also conducted by the Jury Ajit Kumar Dash on 25.02.07. Sh. S.K. Kamila Director, Postal Services, Sambalpur Region was the Chief Speaker in both the functions chaired by Sh. S. Satpathy, Sr. Supdt. of Posts, Dhenkanal. Sh. A.K. Rath, ASPOs, Dhenkanal gave vote of thanks.

Special cover Released



A special cover was released on Seth Hiralal Rampuria at Bikaner on 29.01.2007 by the Hiralal Sobhagmal Rampuria Charity Trust of Gangashahar (Bikaner). He was a businessman and a great social worker of Bikaner, Rajasthan.

News letters released

GPA NEWS

The GPA NEWS Vol-10, No-7 for the month of Feb,07 have been released by the Gujarat Philatelists' Association, Ahmedabad having an article on Konkan Railways, besides other news and information on recent collectable items on Indian stamps and on currency of different countries.

STAMPS OF INDIA NEWS LETTER

The weekly internet Philatelic news letter published by Madhukar Jhingan which was stopped due to some unavoidable circumstance since August 2006 has again been released with its issue No.282 from 1st February 2007. The readers may log on to "www.stampsofindia.com" to know more news

PHILA NEWS

The Phila News, February 2007 released by Philatelia, Kolkata mentioned that the fresh print of the India album sheets for mounting the stamps of the Post Independence section in six volumes having 50 sheets in each volume have been released. The Commemorative section in five volumes and Definitives, Military and service in the 6th Volume. Each volume costs Rs.500/- and Rs.50/- extra towards postage. For details readers may contact PHILATELIA, one Motisil Street, Kolkata-700013.

PHILATELY FESTIVAL

The Koraput Postal division has organised a philately Festival at Rayagada on 20.01.2007. About 300 students of different schools of Jaykaypur, Rayagada, Therubali and Sunabeda attended the festival. The festival was inaugurated by the Chief Guest Sri.M.R.S.P.R Koche, IPS, Supdt. of Police, Rayagada. The persons who addressed the function were Dr..D.K.Mohanty, Lecturer in Political Science, Mr. Ajit Kumar Dash, Secretary, EIPA and Mr. P.N.Pal, Sr. Supdt. of Post Offices, Koraput Division. A small philatelic exhibition was also inaugurated by the S.P., Rayagada. Students of different schools performed several cultural programmes and made this festival a grand success. A quiz contest was also conducted during the festival by Mr. Ajit Kumar Dash, Secretary, EIPA. About 130 student of seven schools participated in the preliminary quiz competition. Miss. Aprna Dey and Master K.Subramaniam of L.S.Public School, Jaykaypur stood first, Master Aditya Barun Buxipatra and Ankush Pattnaik of Sacred Heart

School of Rayagada stood Second, Master Amit Kumar Dash and Susobhit Ghosh of Delhi Public School, NALCO, Damanjodi stood third and Master Trivedi Padhi & Mayant Biswas of Delhi Public School NALCO, Damanjodi got consolation prizes in the Final quiz competition. The valedictory function was addressed by Sri Bhabani Shankar Mohapatra, Addl. Dist. & Sessions Judge, rayagada and prizes were distributed by him to the winners and participants. Sri P.N.Pal, Sr. Supdt of Post Offices told that more philately festivals will be done in backward areas like Gunupur in near future and expressed his deep gratitude to the Secretary, EIPA for well organization of the Quiz which was the main attraction of the Philately Festival.

PHILATELY WORKSHOP

Bhubaneswar

A Philately workshop was organised by the Department of Posts at the Central School, Unit-IX, Bhubaneswar on 27-02-07. The workshop was conducted by the Senior philatelists Mr. Anil Kumar Dhir and Sh Purnendu Kumar Das of Postal Department. About 150 students participated the workshop and learnt different aspects of Philately.

Anandpur, Keonjhar

A philately workshop was organised by the Keonjhar Postal Division on 27.12.2006 at the Ghasipura Jhadeswar High School, Anandpur. About 400 students of different schools attended the workshop. Shri Bibhuti Bhusan Das, Sub-collector, Anandpur was the chief guest and Shri Akhaya Kumar Nayak, President, Keonjhar Philatelic Association was the chief speaker under the chairmanship of Shri Laxmikanta Sethi, Supdt. of Posts, Keonjhar. The speakers have explained the different aspects of Philately and the advantages to adopt this as a hobby.

Special cancellations released in Orissa

During,2006

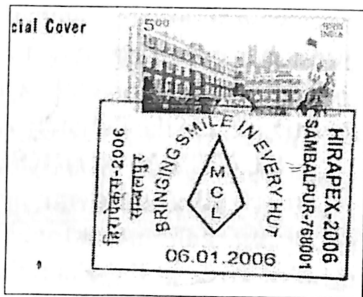
1. HIRAPEX-2006, Ist District level Philatelic Exhibition, Sambalpur, 4-6, Jan,2006. Three covers released.



Special cancellation of 04.01.2006 depicting the memorial of Gangadhar Meher.



Special cancellation of 05.01.2006 depicting the Hiraakud Dam, Samaleswari Temple and Folk Dances of Sambalpur

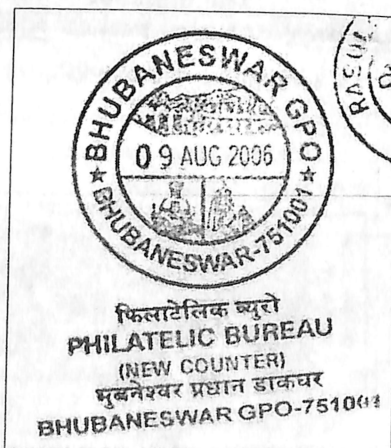


Special cancellation of 06.01.2006 depicting the Logo of Mahanadi Coal Field Limited.

2. Diamond Jubilee of City High School, Berhampur, Ganjam, 6th July, 2006. One cover released.



3. Permanent Pictorial cancellation on Bhubaneswar - on 09.08.2006 at Philatelic Bureau, Bhubaneswar.

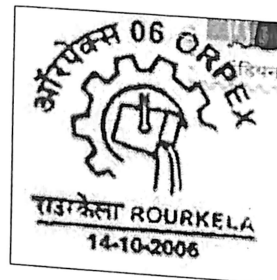


4. Maj. S.C. Mohanty memorial Philatelic Exhibition - one cover released.

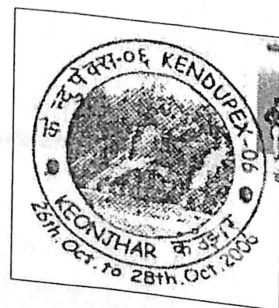


Special cancellation on Maj.S.C.Mohanty

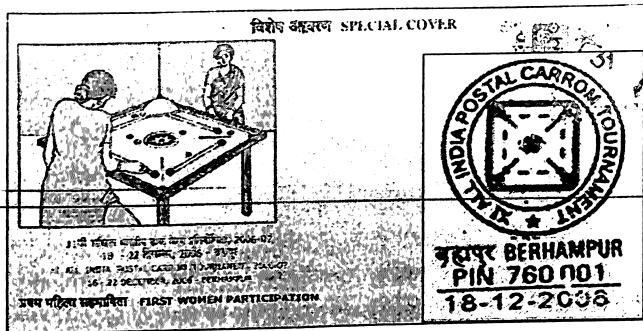
5. ORPEX-06- The 8th State level Philatelic exhibition, 14-16, October, 2006 at Rourkela, Sundargarh. Three covers released on Rourkela Steel Plant, Vedavyas and Jayadev.



6. KENDUPEX-2006- 1st District level philatelic exhibition at Keonjhar. Two covers released on Sana Ghagara waterfall and Gonashika.



7. All India Postal Carrom Competition, Berhampur, Ganjam- 18.12.2006, one cover released depicting first women participation.



WHAT'S NEW IN INDIA

16/6 AND THE AFTERMATH - THE GURU GRANTH SAHIB STAMP

(PART-2)

(Continued from previous issue)

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The DoP's recent position is that since the stamp was never released, the question of its withdrawal does not arise. But this is an afterthought, which appears to be taken in a huff, and quite contradicts the instructions that were embodied in the Dy. Director General (Philately)'s Letter No. D.O. No. 16-199/2003-Phil dated 05/08-8-05.

In fact, a written reply from the Minister in the Lok Sabha [Indian Parliament] on 24 August 2005 reinforced these second thoughts from the DoP. The Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology replied with a 'negative' to a pointed question from a Member as to whether the DoP had dropped the plan to release the stamp. Of course, any policy decision leads to follow-up. Proposals on stamp issues are made within issuing policy and once these are formulated then release, with due ceremony, is the customary consequence. The ethics of a postal administration do demand that the DoP cannot deprive the public, stamp collectors and philatelists of stamps and other philatelic material merely under the pretext of objections from a sectional interest.

The philately of offence

Withdrawal and reissue of controversial stamps, especially with images that are offensive on religious grounds, are often come across in philately. This episode reminds the Indian philatelic fraternity of an analogous situation that cropped up when the 9th Asian Games Stamp (from the 5th issue, SG 1059) was released on 6 November 1982 and sold from philatelic bureaux and counters for some days. It was abruptly withdrawn on an objection pertaining to the religious sentiments raised by a section of people inside and outside Parliament. However,

normal sale of stamps was restored within a couple of months. [See *India Post* 80, p40, of 1982 for further comment on this stamp].

A current example is of the British Royal Mail Service 68 pence Christmas stamp featuring a man with a Tilak and the women adorned with Kumkum (traditional Hindu markings) and wearing Indian ceremonial clothing and jewellery worshipping the Baby Jesus was partially withdrawn because of objections raised by Hindu groups in Britain. The stamp is one of a series of the six Mother and Child stamps that was issued on 1 November 2005. The row between Hindu community leaders and Royal Mail is basically attributed to a design which shows practicing Hindus worshipping the Baby Christ. Royal Mail stated on 5 November that 'The Company (Royal Mail) will now tell Post Office branches not to issue the 68 pence Christmas stamp to customers unless specifically requested. Royal Mail will not carry out a second print run of the stamp. Current stocks will be exhausted in two or three days.'

But these examples are no precedent for the treatment given to the Guru Granth Sahib stamp of 2005. India Post declared outright that the stamp was 'unauthorised' and banned its use for either payment of postage or any philatelic purpose including exhibition, despite the fact that Indian stamps are sold on Post Office counters for at least two months and even stated the issue to be 'in illegal circulation'. As other Postal Administrations have found, once a stamp is released, its supply cannot be delayed for indefinite period, especially when a lot of stamps, miniature sheets and related items have been sneaked into the volatile and speculative philatelic market. Factually it discriminates between the haves and have-nots. Material such as this may be freely available on the open market but only at exorbitantly high premiums.

Damage control

As a part of their damage control the DoP came up with a new release date for Guru Granth Sahib-September 2005-*vide* its Letter No. 16-131/2005-Phil dated 6 September 2005. However, the Department as expected failed to keep to its Stamp Issue Program for 2005. The question now arises as to the DoP's declaration that the stamps were 'unauthorised', and status and justification of the revenue generated from the sale of this philatelic material accepted by the DoP and duly credited to the account of the Finance Ministry / Consolidated Fund of the Govt. of India? This raises several issues that cannot be simply swept aside and poses a

multifaceted matter for open discussion as to what the legal validity of the stamps declared as 'unauthorised' really is. Could unilateral instruction, such as 'guard against honouring these stamps if used in payment of postage or for any philatelic purpose including philatelic exhibits' really withstand the acid test of judicial adjudication? Certainly there has been neither theft, nor fraudulent withdrawal from the Government exchequer. The key question which needs to be addressed is how to account for the accrual loss of just over Rs.10.2 Million (£148,150) from the National Exchequer in printing and transport costs, and withdrawal of around 90% of the total philatelic items alone related to Guru Granth Sahib stamps, apart from the establishment cost?

During the course of this countrywide survey, interesting errors and varieties of Guru Granth Sahib stamps and miniature sheets came to light (figs. 7, 8, and 9). In circulation were found many major printing errors; colour omitted, printing shifts in every possible direction, double and misplaced prints and errors of perforation (imperf, perforation shifts in different directions, double perforations etc). That, perhaps 9.75 to 12% of the total one million stamps ordered were defective and in the market indicates lapses at the India Security Press, Nasik (now

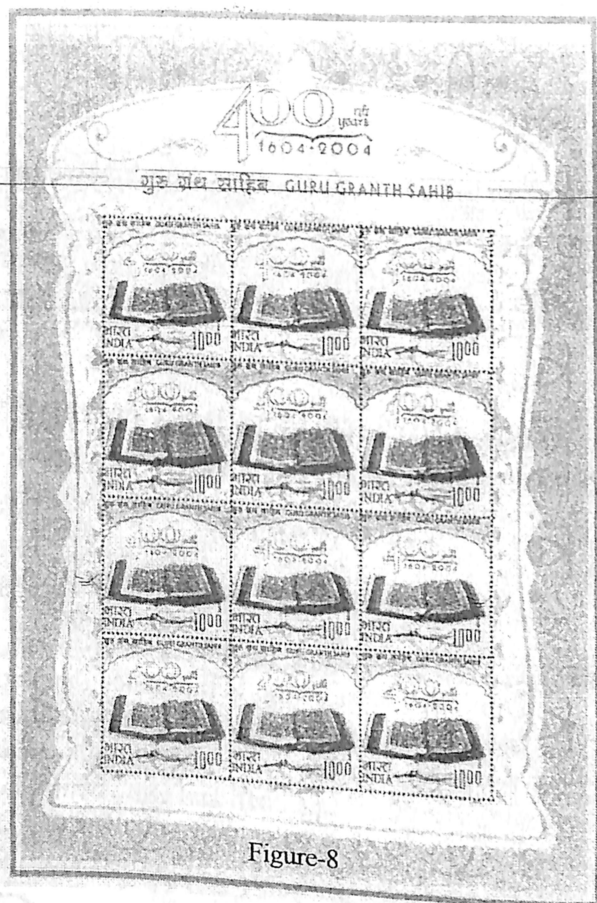


Figure-8

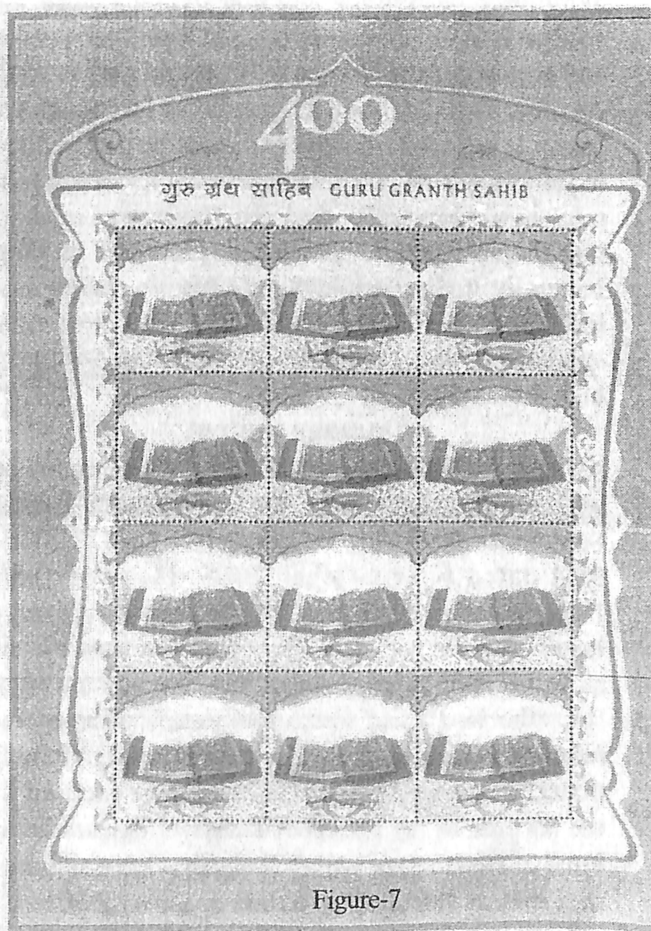


Figure-7

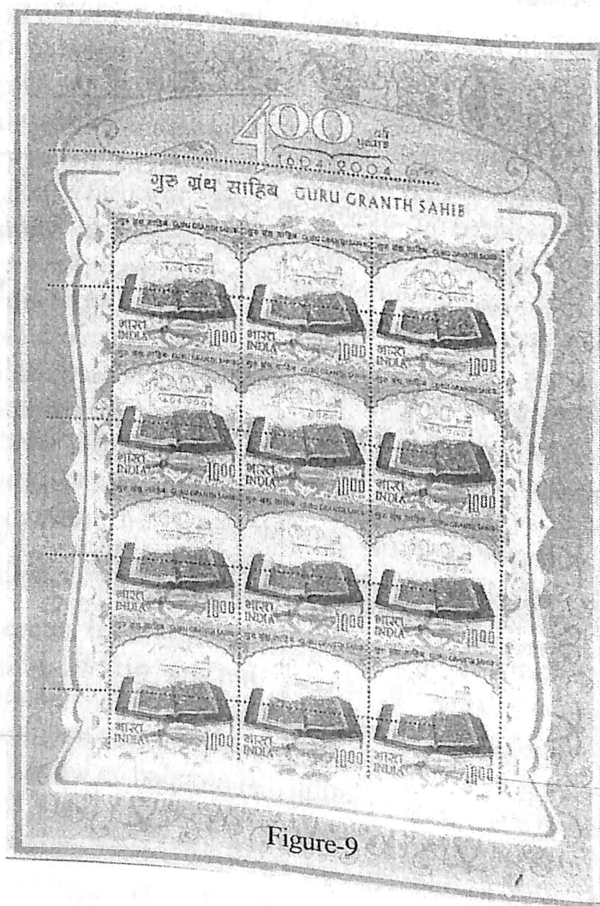


Figure-9

Nashik), a press once renowned for its utmost surveillance and highest security.

What's good and what's fake

In absence of any regulatory rider on specifications for the size of the postmark, the fonts, spacing, stops, and ornamental embellishments, if any-a range of minor varieties of fake cachets surfaced in the volatile philatelic market. Admittedly the Postal

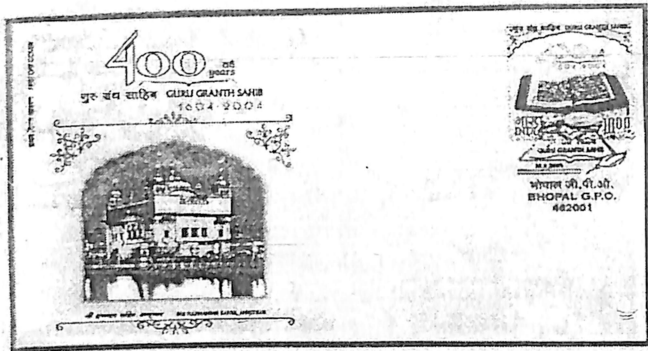


Figure-10

Directorate guidelines on manufacturing cachets locally at postal circle level have widened the scope for forgery by spurious dealers and investors-turned-

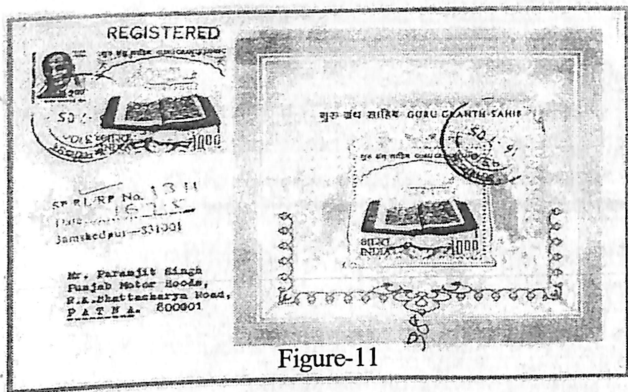


Figure-11

dealers. This species has recently mushroomed and certainly showed its presence, vitiating genuine philatelic trading. One recent example, among others, is of covers bearing the recalled Guru Granth Sahib stamp and forged First Day cancellations but claiming to have been genuinely cancelled at Bhopal, Jamshedpur and Varanasi philatelic bureaux. Astonishingly, one dealer from Jamshedpur boasts holding stock of Guru Granth Sahib FDCs cancelled

on 16 June 2005 despite authoritative sources in Jharkhand Postal Circle denying to have either manufactured or supplied the cancellation cachet of the 'Guru Granth Sahib' stamps at Jamshedpur Philatelic Bureau. Members of Jamshedpur Philatelic Society (JPS) hold a similar view and expressed ignorance of any such cancellation cachet ever having been available at the Bureau, while admitting that some of them were lucky enough to lay hands on the information brochure, blank FDCs, miniature sheet and sheetlets.

Undoubtedly the FDCs cancelled 16 June 2005 from Bhopal and Jamshedpur and the Speed Post/Registered covers with later dated computer generated PO labels are authentic but ghost registered covers dated after 16 June, and First Day Special covers whose cancellations do not conform to the type-set, fonts and other specifications of the original cancellation must be of doubtful status. The survey recorded 20 to 25 genuine First Day Covers, either cancelled on the 16 June 2005 or bearing later computer generated Speed Post; Registered Post labels. Most of the proud collectors of genuinely cancelled FDCs and used covers bearing this stamp have not revealed any plans to sell. Sadly the DoP-a victim of circumstances - unwillingly succumbed to the unwarranted immense pressure ostensibly of the National Commission for Minorities, a statutory body, but at the clandestine behest of the SGPC. The DoP withdrew the Guru Granth Sahib stamp because it feared unleashing social and political upheaval. Unquoted authoritative sources attribute it to a behind the scenes game between the powerful Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee and the Punjab State Government to secure political mileage to their own advantage through the choice of venue (Amritsar, Chandigarh or Delhi) and of dignitary who would release the stamp.

Loser In The Game

The SGPC derailed from its aims and missed an opportunity to propagate the lofty teachings of six Sikh Gurus, the collective religious and spiritual wisdom derived from the fifteen Hindu, Muslim, Saints, Sufis and Bhagats, underprivileged and downtrodden spiritual leaders, eleven Bards and four Sikh the disciples. Such wisdom is enshrined in the Holy Granth Sahib: the oneness of God, social and gender equity, rejection of caste system, the dignity and honour of man, cardinal principles for living day-to-day life as *Kirat Karna* [work with one's own hands] *Name japana* [constant meditation of the divinity in and all around]

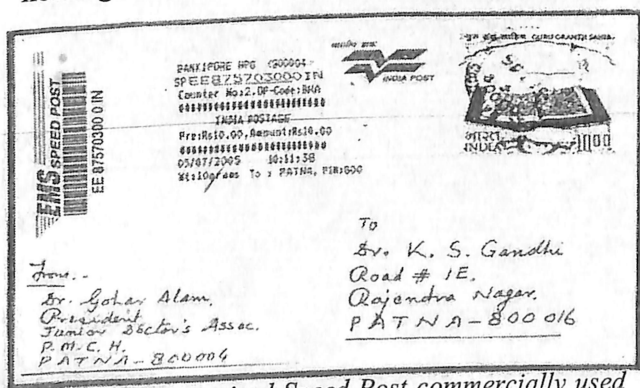


Fig.12 Computerised Speed Post commercially used dated 5th July 2005 from Bankipur (Patna) HPO

and *Vand Chhakana* [sharing of the material gains with the needy] to masses across the globe to acquaint them with the philosophy, history, heritages, tradition and culture of the Sikhs.

Ultimate Gainer

The philatelic fraternity gains, with the addition of one more modern rarity to the Indian philately, Surprised?- Not at all but it happens also in the philately, of course by chance !



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(In this column the views and comments of our beloved readers are pulshed which are their own.)

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