

ICCG News

Numismatic News Paper of India

A Division of :- INDIAN COINS & CURRENCY GROUP

India's Largest Numismatic Community

Monthly Newspaper for Coins, Currencies, Collectibles & Events

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Numismatic and Philately Events Postponed or Cancelled

In light of the Coronavirus pandemic, many events that were slated to take place in the nation have all been rescheduled, postponed and some are even cancelled. All numismatic and philately events and exhibitions throughout the nation have been postponed or cancelled in the wake of the outbreak of the corona virus disease now named COVID-19.

However, the organizers maybe in negotiations to reschedule the events for sometime in June or August, but operators of other events that have also been cancelled are likewise trying to reschedule, clouding an already busy calendar. With a tally of effected persons increasing day by day many event organisers and authorities have swung into action to prevent large gatherings and work towards putting preventive measures to stop the virus from spreading.



Rs 2000, Rs 500, Rs 200 or any note can Spread Coronavirus! SBI Research Suggests an Alternative

In order to prevent the spread of novel Coronavirus through cash, SBI Research has suggested the government to examine the possibility of using polymer currency notes, instead of paper currency notes, on the lines of countries like Australia, UK and Canada. Experts say that the virus can spread through currency notes. Hence, it is better to switch to digital mode of transactions. But then, complete avoidance of cash in a country like India is probably not possible. Hence, there is a need for a safer alternative to paper currency notes.

In its 'Ecowrap' report dated March 17, 2020, the SBI Research said, "Even if due precautions are taken, yet avoidance of cash usage cannot be avoided

and as such it becomes one of the most easy carrier for spreading any virus. Therefore, immediate steps should be taken to check spreading of any virus through currency notes. Countries like UK, Australia and Canada have switched to polymer notes to reduce the risk of spreading infections through currency. Therefore, the possibilities of usage of polymer notes in India should also be examined." However, for the time being, alternate mode of payments including digital payments should be encouraged.

The SBI Research report cited several research reports showing a connection of currency notes and microorganisms. It noted that a report by Confederation Of All India Traders (CAIT) had indicated that currency notes carry micro-organisms that can cause diseases and infections. "Experts have warned that several diseases, including urinary and respiratory tract infections, skin infections and recurrent meningitis, are being transmitted through currency notes. They can also contribute to causing septicaemia and toxic shock syndrome," the report said.

It further noted: "As coronavirus is an infectious disease which may spread by close contact of any person infected with such virus. Evidences suggest that currency notes are a source of infection and dangerous to health, more so because many of the pathogens on them are multi-drug resistant strains."



Coins and Stamps Exhibition in Vellore that takes you back in Time

The annual Numismatics and Philately Exhibition organized by the Numismatic and Philatelic Association of Vellore Fort is on at Town Hall here.

The three day exhibition was inaugurated by Vellore District Collector A. Shanmuga Sundaram in the presence of P. Komal Kumar, Superintendent of Post Offices, Vellore Division, and T. Rajendran of Laxmi Garden and Springdays School.

Nearly 500 coins were displayed by C. Thamizhvanan, president of the organizing association. He displayed some of his prized collections such as the bend bar coins of Taxila (now a region in Pakistan), Sakya Janapadha (600-500 B.C., Buddha's dynasty), and Asmaka Janapadha (600-500 B.C.).

A rare coin issued in commemoration of the victory of King Rajendra Chola over the Ganges region and coins on the Arcot rulers including Khan Sahib (also known as 'Marudhanayagam') were part of the display.

Every coin in his possession has a story behind it. He explained how some coins of the Arcot rulers have Tamil script on them, perhaps implying the integration of the languages. "Coins come in various materials, textures and shapes," he said, pointing to the square, octagonal and circular coins.

Some other coins on display were from Gandhara, the Pandya, Maurya and Vijayanagara dynasty, Chera period and those that belonged to ruler Ashoka and the Nizam of Hyderabad.

The exhibition also included some commemorative coins such as the 150th year celebrations of the Indian Railways (2003), the platinum jubilee celebrations of the Dhandi March (2005) and the 100-rupee and 5-rupee commemorative coins released on the occasion of the birth centenary of Kamaraj (2004).

There is a separate section for antiques, secured from various places of Vellore and Tiruvannamalai districts, and photographs of ancient rulers and freedom fighters.



Iran Unveiled a Commemorative Postage Stamp to Honor Coronavirus Medical Workers as it still faces accusations of fabricating the death toll

Iran unveiled a commemorative postage stamp in support of medical workers fighting the coronavirus, while continuing to be dogged by accusations of a cover-up and gross negligence over the crisis.

Footage broadcast Tuesday on Iranian state news network IRIB showed President Hassan Rouhani unveiling the stamp, emblazoned with a male doctor in blue scrubs and a facemask alongside a woman.

The release of the stamp follows news last week that Iran will make the doctors and nurses that die while battling the coronavirus "martyrs," according to ABC News.

Like many other countries, Iran is desperately struggling to contain the virus, but Rouhani and other officials have been accused by politicians and medical professionals of fabricating death stats, lying about their medical capacity, and not acting fast enough to control the outbreak.

"The official response was glaring denial of the magnitude of the crisis," Iranian doctors-in-exile Kamiar Alaei and Arash Alaei wrote in the New York Times in early March.



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Newly - Renovated Mysuru Rail Museum Opens

Mysore/Mysuru: Depicting the rich history and the progress of the 150-year-old Indian Railways, the 'Mysuru Rail Museum' set up in 1979, which was closed for a while for renovations and refurbishment, was inaugurated on 14th March 2020. As a mark of respect, South Western Railway (SWR) General Manager Ajay Kumar Singh asked the oldest employee of the Railway Museum, H. Ashwathnarayan, to inaugurate the newly renovated museum. SWR AGM Prashant Kumar Mishra, Mysuru Division Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) Aparna Garg, South Western Women's Welfare Organisation President Sujata Singh, who is also the wife of Ajay Kumar Singh, and all the employees of the Museum were present on the occasion.

Lauding the efforts of workers involved in Rail Museum renovations, Ajay Kumar Singh said that 13 selected employees will be awarded Rs. 5,000 each for their efforts and a special cash prize of Rs. 1 lakh will be awarded for the entire team work. To mark the inauguration, a special commemorative postal cover, in association with the India Post, was released. Speaking on the occasion, Mysuru Division DRM Aparna Garg said that the Rail Museum, spread over 3 acres, is eco-friendly and no trees were cut during the renovation process. Also, dustbins have been kept at many places across the museum premises and an information kiosk has been set up for the benefit of those visiting the museum.

The museum is a repertoire of some unique collections including lamps used by Guards during the meter gauge era, a Austin rail motor car from England which was used by Railway officers while on track inspection during 1925, exclusive Indian Railway posters which have been compiled as a collection in the Indoor Gallery, telephones used during the 19th century at the Signal and Telecommunication Gallery.

The newly-renovated museum has a lot of added attractions including the 'Rail Coach Cafe and Cafeteria'; an old railway coach which has been remodelled into a restaurant-style seating area where visitors can purchase snacks, other food items and beverages. Another attraction, especially for kids is a model Railway Station at the museum entrance named 'Central Park' with a model ticketing counter. The kids will be allowed to ride in a battery operated Toy Train on a round trip from this 'Central Park' station. En route, they will be greeted by a 'Toy Band' created from scrap materials by the staff of Mysore Workshop, a tunnel, model railway crossing and railway signals. Each gallery has a touch-screen monitor with information about the collections there and the history of these collections at the museum.

The most prized possession of the Mysuru Rail Museum is the 'Maharani's Saloon' coach of 1839, which was used by the wife of erstwhile ruler of Wadiyar dynasty, Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar. Visitors can get a glimpse of the royal bedroom, dining room, the royal bathroom, servant's room, study and dressing tables, which were set up inside the coach for her Highness.

Other attractions include metal sculpture of a young girl treading carefully on the tracks, steam locomotive engines, boilers, hand-cranes, steam pumps, trolley car, sleeper-coach manufacturing, Station Master, dressed in white. with his telecommunication systems, a MG (Meter Gauge) Bus which was run between Shivamogga and Talaguppa in 1939, Inspection Coaches, a model of Railway Turn Table and a scroll nailed to one of the trees at the museum, with messages on environment protection.



Coin and Stamp Lovers Journey Back in Time

Bengaluru: Numismatists had a field day at Shikshakara Sadana, which is hosting the 11th national numismatic exhibition. Coins dating back two thousand years, limited edition notes, antique books and autographs from some of the world's greatest personalities drew hundreds of coin and stamp lovers to the event.

"In terms of quality of coin collection, North India may be doing better, but as far as notes are concerned, Bengaluru numismatists are not far behind. In the past five years, a lot of interest has been noticed among youngsters too," said Archie Maru, joint convener of the event.

Prashant Shet, a jeweller from Mangaluru, exhibited 104 coins from the Ganga dynasty. It ruled from Kolar and later Talakadu around 350AD. "All the coins have elephants on them but are different when it comes to other symbols, which most people overlook. So I decided to focus only on these coins. I would have spent Rs 25-30 lakh on the collection," he said.

Shreyas BM, a techie, is fascinated by notes from 33 countries that still use Queen Elizabeth II's face on them. "I started working only three years ago. Till then, as a student, I used to work part-time to earn money so that I could spend on these notes," he said.

For some others, the interests are different. Solapur-based Kishor Chandak has an extensive autograph collection that consist letters from Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell and Edward VII, among others. R Raghavendra has a collection of rare and antique books. This includes VD Savarkar's The Indian War of Independence that was banned by the British, a 170-year old India in Greece and Biography of Napoleon. "I prefer reading old books," he said.



In Chennai

Schoolchildren get to Display their Stamp Collections at the Philatelic Bureau

For the first time, the Philatelic Bureau, Anna Road Head Post Office, was hosting the philately collections of students.

The collection of 228 students from 12 schools was on display at 'Clubfest 2020', a month-long philatelic exhibition. The Department of Posts organised the exhibition as a step to promote philately among schoolchildren. Of the 227 philately clubs opened in schools, nearly 160 are in Chennai.

The members of these philately clubs were encouraged to collect stamps and also trained in exhibiting their collection through workshops. They got to learn how to sequence stamps that could tell a story and showcase them in a theme. M. Sampath, Chief Postmaster General, Tamil Nadu Circle, had earlier released a special cover on the occasion of the display.

Officials of the Postal Department said nearly 270 entries were received from members of philately clubs. The chosen students were given an opportunity to showcase their stamp collection. Some of the themes of the stamps on display included food and nutrition, sports, transport, women empowerment and Indian Armed Forces.

Such exhibitions will expose budding philatelists to the art of showcasing their exhibits. The clubs have also encouraged children to open philatelic accounts in post offices. Of the 15,584 such accounts across the State, 2,449 were opened in 2019-20. Similarly, in Chennai City region, there are 3,650 philatelic accounts now. Of these, 771 were opened during this fiscal, an official said.

The Philately Bureau organises exhibition on a particular theme every month. In March, there are plans to host an exhibition on women empowerment to mark International Women's day, officials added.



NNPA – NNE Awardees for the year 2020

During the three day exhibition few senior collectors were awarded for their contribution in their respective hobbies.

Dr. Raja Reddy from Hyderabad was felicitated with the Lifetime Achievement Award. **Shri. Basti Solanki** from Pune was awarded in Special Category.

Shri. K Ganesh from Bangalore, **Shri. Ranvijay Singh** from Lucknow, **Shri. Ravi Shankar Sharma** from Kolkata and **Shri. Sanjeev Kumar** from USA were felicitated for Numismatics.

Shri. Alkesh Arora from Jodhpur, **Shri. Amarbir Singh** from Hyderabad, **Shri. Jayesh Gala** and **Shri. Percy Sigantorporia** from Mumbai were felicitated for Notaphily.

Shri. Anil Reddy from Chennai, **Shri. Ramu MS** and **Dr. R G Sangoram** from Bangalore were felicitated for Philately.

Shri. Amarjeet Singh from New Delhi and **Shri. Kishor Vallabh Chandak** from Sholapur were felicitated for Autograph collections. The award felicitation ceremony took place on 21st February at 11 am in presence of **Shri. M Goutham Kumar** Honourable Mayor of Bengaluru and **Shri. Rezwan Razack MD Prestige Group**.



Govt to Reclassify Ancient Monuments, Review Policy Regulating Construction around ASI-Protected Sites

As a result of this reclassification, some sites, when removed from the central list, will allow development work in their vicinity.

The government will review a policy which regulates construction around centrally protected monuments to classify them based on their historical significance, Culture Minister Prahlad Patel said.

According to the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958, there is a ban on construction within 100 metres of a centrally protected monument and regulated construction within 100-200 metres.

Over the years, the law has stalled significant development work around these areas resulting in the government moving an amendment to the law in the last Parliament session pushing for the removal of such restrictions.

The amendments were passed in Lok Sabha, which was sent to a committee by Rajya Sabha.

“We are planning to reclassify all monuments based on their historical significance. Relevant authorities have been asked to produce the roadmap,” said Patel.

He said that for monuments such as the Taj Mahal nothing must be built for at least 500 metres around it. However, if it is a burial ground or a samadhi, then the same logic need not apply.

“If a mazar or a samadhi is there and there is a limitation that for 300 metres nothing can be built, why should it be so.

“We are preparing the amendments. We received a case from Surat where in the middle of the design of smart city there was a British grave,” he told as per the reports with ICCG News.

He said the list of the centrally protected monuments had not seen a substantial increase in many years, and important sites under the state governments could be added to the list, Patel said.

As a result of this reclassification, some sites, when removed from the central list, will allow development work in their vicinity.

Explaining the stand of the minister, a senior culture ministry official said that most of the monuments in the country had been classified according to the importance given to it by the British.

“The reclassification of monuments now will be done based on their importance and relevance to modern India,” he said.

Sources say that a Cabinet note will soon be presented on the amendments to the law.

There are 3,691 centrally protected monuments and sites under the Archeological Survey of India (ASI).

The highest number of sites are in Uttar Pradesh at 745 monuments and sites followed by Karnataka at 506 and Tamil Nadu at 413.





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Pot of Gold Coins Unearthed at Thiruvanaikovil Temple

Tiruchy: Devotees at the Jambukeswarar temple in Thiruvanaikovil were in for a pleasant surprise on 26th February when workers stumbled upon a treasure inside the sprawling premises.

According to officials, workers engaged in cleaning a vacant empty plot near the Akilandeswari shrine spotted a sealed pot. Upon opening it, officials found 505 gold coins weighing 1716 grams. The coins are to be examined by archaeologists to ascertain their age and history.

The Akilandeswari Samedha Jambukeswarar temple was believed to be constructed 1800 years ago by Chola chieftain Kotchengannan (Prince with red eyes). The temple is a majestic complex, complete with courts, towers and ponds. Over a period of time, the temple received donations including silver Vahanams, gold ornaments and land. Standing tall over a millennium, the temple is one of the important sites in the city and attracts large footfall.

According to sources, the temple management has been carrying out smaller renovation in a periodic manner. On Wednesday, the temple management had planned to clear vegetation off the Valai Kottam located opposite to the ambal sannidhi and develop a Nandhavanam (flower garden). As workers were clearing the bushes, they found a brass pot. Curious workers cracked open the lid and found gold coins to its rim. The information was passed on to district administration.

Srirangam Tahsildar came to the temple and examined the contents, the pot contained 505 gold coins, which weighed about 1,716 grams. As the coins seem to be having historical inscriptions and symbols, officials from the Archaeological department are expected to check the coins on Thursday.

Currently, the gold treasure is kept at the treasury for safekeeping.



Ramprasad Gupta gets Percy Ghyara Youth Achievement Award

Ramprasad has taken active interest in philately for the past four years.

He has been exhibiting and contributing articles related to philately

Ramprasad Gupta, a sixteen years old prodigy studying in Standard X at G D Somani Memorial School, Mumbai received Percy Ghyara Youth Achievement Award from the Deccan Philatelic Society. Ram is a member of Nagpur Philatelic Society headed by Jayant Khedkar. Ramprasad has taken active interest in philately for the past four years.

He has been exhibiting and contributing articles related to philately. He likes writing letters. Most of his friends and acquaintances have been pleasantly surprised by a birthday wish by snail mail. He is also an avid post-crosser. Besides, he is a nature lover and adores butterflies in particular. He has varied interests like Hindustani classical music, chess, reading and writing prose and poetry.



A lot of his articles, etc have been published in places like Children Compassionate Club E-Mag (CCC- IDA Emag), HT Next, NIE and 'The Hitavada Twinkle Star'. He wishes to join Indian Foreign Services and actively contribute in elevating Indian diplomatic ties. Many people continue to contribute towards the development of Ram, making the world a better place for him and he is ever thankful to everyone.

Postponed or Cancelled

RANG FAIR 2020
Organised by : Royal Arts & Numismatics Gallery (RANG)

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Date
3rd - 5th
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9717517872

Mumbai: New galleries for Harappan necklaces, coins from Gupta Era

All that glitters is definitely gold at the two new galleries of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS) in Mumbai. On February 23, the museum inaugurated its permanent jewellery and money galleries, with many objects from the in house collection that is displayed for the first time. Both galleries are supported by the Hemendra Kothari Foundation. With this venture, CSMVS' public jewellery gallery will be one of its kind in the country. The National Museum in Delhi had a jewellery gallery, which was operational from 2014 to 2019. Jaipur has two jewellery galleries, both private.



Royal jewellery usually used gold and precious stones, so it didn't always show great experimentation with design or materials, said Manisha Nene of CSMVS who has co-curated this gallery with art historian Usha R Balakrishnan. The gallery has jewellery made of not just precious metals, but also fish scales, beetle wings and elephant hair.

With more than 400 objects on display, the highlights include replicas of prized Golconda diamonds gifted by the Indian branch of the GIA (Gemological Institute of America), a chank or head ornament made of gold and precious stones discovered during excavations for the Port Trust work at Elephanta Island, and a perfume bottle made of jade belonging to Jahangir from 1626 AD.

One section is dedicated entirely to Maharashtrian jewellery, which boasts of different maals (necklaces) made of beads resembling watermelon seeds, wheat grains and ber fruit.

Balakrishnan, who has written several books on historic jewellery, said that the curation reflects an unbroken tradition of art and craft in India, right from the time of the Harappan civilization. "We are looking at a 5,000-year-old tradition to present an unbroken continuity of love for adornment and craftsmanship skills that have passed from guru to shishya," she said.

For instance, a terracotta relief from West Bengal dated around the second century BC shows a yakshi wearing elaborate hairpins. Similar designs were still in use in 20th century India. An array of keshalankars (hair ornaments), many of which were purchased by the museum from The late hair stylist, Veena Shroff, add to this thematic curation.

The jewellery gallery leads into the money gallery, curated by Vandana Prapanna of CSMVS. The museum's previous coin gallery was dismantled for the landmark exhibition 'India and the World: A History in Nine Stories', in 2017. Among the 850 pieces, there are "punch-marked" coins, irregular metal strips from 6th century BC that were punched with symbols belonging to various rulers; and, larins, coins in the shape of clips, which people could attach to their robes, from the Adil Shahi dynasty. Prapanna said that several gold coins are on display for the first time, including some from the Kushan and Gupta empires.

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Venue: Hotel Prince Viraj JDA Scheme no. 41, Near Ekta Square, Vijay Nagar, Mr4 Road, Jabalpur, MP.

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Contact: Mohit Rathore (9977333336) Ashutosh Agrawal (7000686883)
E-mail: puratatvamudrajbp@gmail.com

An OMS (Off-metal Strike) coin of the republic India.

This type of error occurs when the coin is minted on a metal that it is not intended for. This is an OMS (Off-metal Strike) 5 rupees coin is minted on a FSS (Ferritic Stainless Steel) planchet.



Coin Description :- Value: 5 rupees.
Year: 2019 Mint: Kolkata
Shape: Circular Diameter: 25 mm
OMS Metal: FSS (Ferritic Stainless Steel)
Origin Metal: 75% of copper, 20% of Zinc & 05% Nickel.

Obverse: The obverse have the Lion Capitol of Ashoka Pillar with the legend 'Satyamev Jayate' in Hindi inscribed below, flanked on the left periphery with the word 'Bharat' in Hindi language and on the right with word "INDIA" in English.

Reverse: The reverse face of the coin will have a denominational value "5" in the international numerals. The Rupee symbol shall be shown above the denominational value. The coin also has a design of grains depicting the agricultural dominance of the country is flanked on the left periphery of the coin. The top right and bottom right peripheries have the word 'Paanch Rupaye' in Hindi and "FIVE RUPEES" in English. The year of minting in international numerals shall be shown in the centre of the left periphery of the coin.

OMS error coins are normally quite sought-after.

This coin of the month is chosen from the collection of Shri Vastupal Shah's collection from Ahmedabad

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Commemorative Coins of Modern India: Year wise & mint wise journey with ICCG News

आधुनिकि भारत के स्मरणीय सक्िके: वर्षवार, टक्साल्वार यात्रा ICCG न्यूज के साथ

Commemorative coins of India are usually issued to celebrate some special occasion or to mark a special event. They also have been issued as a mark of respect towards some distinguished individuals or monument. Indian commemorative coins were issued from the 1964 onwards. Such coins have a distinct design with reference to the occasion on which they were issued. Few coins of this category serve as collector's items only, although most commemorative coins are issued for regular circulation. Modern and Commemorative Indian Coins are very interesting to discuss as they cover various topics like Indian Independence Struggle, War, Peace, Wildlife, Vegetation, Great Personalities, Various Events and Organizations. The highest valued coin is INR 1000 that was issued on the occasion of 1000 years of Brihadeeswarar Temple. In 1 set, there may be 2 to 9 coins of different denominations.

MINTS: Commemorative coins are made at various mints across India including the ones at (Bombay) Mumbai, Noida, (Calcutta) Kolkata & Hyderabad.

1994 – Water for Life (World Food Day) Issue

Along with land and air, water is earth's basic assets. It is directly or indirectly required for all living creatures and plants for sustaining their lives. No life on this earth can thrive without water. So man must learn to make rational use of this resource.

To highlight the necessity to give much higher priority for ensuring safe drinking water and sustainable water supply, this 2 rupees commemorative coin was issued for general circulation on 16th October, 1994 – the World Food Day.



Obverse: The obverse of this coin shows the Ashokan lion, 'Satyameva Jayate' in Hindi and the value '2' in International numerals under it. In English "INDIA" and "RUPEES" appear on the right periphery and in Hindi "Bharat" and "Rupaye" appear on the left.

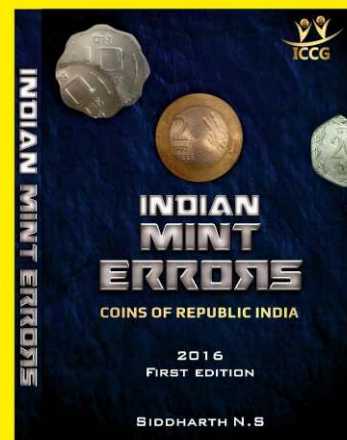
Reverse: The reverse of this coin show, a stream and a big water drop falling on it, at the center. The F.A.O. crest appears above the water drop and '1994' -- the year of issue is shown below the stream. The legend 'Jal Jivan Ka Adhar Biswa Khadya Divas' in Hindi appear in two lines on the top left quadrant and 'WATER FOR LIFE WORLD FOOD DAY' in English appear in two lines on the top right quadrant of the periphery.

Specifications:

Year of issue: 1994 **Weight:** 8 grams **Shape:** Circular
Diameter: 28 mm **Edge:** Security
Mint: Kolkata, Mumbai & Hyderabad
Metal composition: Cupro Nickel Alloy (75% Copper & 25% Nickel)

Indian Mint Errors

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Women's day: Postal Dept Releases Special Cover

Coimbatore: For the first time in the western region, the postal department issued a special cover with a gold cancellation to commemorate the International Women's Day on 08th March.

The cancellation is in the shape of the zodiac sign of Venus, inside of which is the slogan 'Each for Equal' and the 'International Women's Day' above it.

The special cover, designed in shades of pink and purple, was released by postmaster general Sheuli Burman and superintendent of post offices Sudhir Gopal Jakhere. Shri.

Jakhere, said the Coimbatore postal division released the

special cover, which is an unique phila-numismatic cover with two original commemorative coins incorporated in it. The cover contains original 1980 "Rural Women's Advancement" 10 paise coin and 25 paise coin. For the first time in this region, a gold embossed cancellation was used for the special cover. "It has very great philatelic value," he said.

It is a rare collectible not just because of the gold cancellation, but also of the two commemorative coins on the cover.

"The phila numismatic cover has a 10p aluminium coin and 25p copper-nickel coin released in 1980. They are commemorative coins released in limited numbers," said philatelist and numismatist T Selvaraj, who helped to procure the coins for the release. "It also has a galloping horse on it."

Of the 1,500 covers, priced at Rs 200 each, 500 were up for sale in Coimbatore. The postal department in Pondicherry had issued a gold cancellation a few years ago.



Soon, walk through interiors of Konark Sun Temple, now sealed with sand

Konark: In a historic move, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) on Saturday accepted a proposal to remove

sand from inside the Konark Sun Temple, Odisha's only UNESCO World Heritage Site. Hundred and seventeen years after the British filled the Jagamohan (assembly hall of the monument) with sand to save it from crumbling, country's premier archaeological conservation body has made the first bold move. ASI accepted the proposal at the end of the two-day national conference on 'Conservation of Sun Temple' attended by

Union Culture Minister Prahlad Singh Patel. "Sand will be removed from the ancient structure and ASI has been asked to prepare a report on the modalities," Patel said.

One of the architectural marvels of the world, the 13th-century monument's Jagamohan has remained sealed since 1903 when sand was poured inside for its structural stability. ASI will form a small committee of experts to examine as well as decide the openings through which the sand can be removed. The Central Building Research Institute (CBRI), which was roped in by ASI to examine structural damages in the Jagamohan, will be part of the panel.

As per recommendations submitted by conservation experts to ASI in 1987, sand could be moved out through three points which include 'Amalakh' (fluted finial stone) on the top of the structure besides two others on northern and western sides. "We will study the best and safest routes to enter Jagamohan considering its structural stability and then proceed with the work," said Superintending Archaeologist of ASI-Bhubaneswar circle Arun Mallik.

ASI possesses expertise in dismantling and re-constructing temples and such works have been successfully executed in Mahakala temple in Ratnagiri and several temples outside the State.



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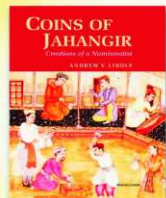
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