

DEFINITIONS OF PHILATELIC TERMS

- 1. Philatelic Bureau:** Philatelic Bureau is a branch of a Head or Sub Post Office specifically set up by the Department to deal with the receipt and sale of all philatelic items, like special/commemorative stamps, first day covers, special covers, new issue on definitive stamps and new stationery etc. It also provides special cancellations on F.D.Cs and special covers or on covers presented to the bureau for the purpose of special cancellations. It maintains up-to-date record and relevant information of all the issues for supply to the stamp collection and intending purchasers. It maintains Philatelic Deposit Accounts and also deals with mail orders.
- 2. Philatelic Counter:** The Philatelic Counter is a counter for sale of philatelic items and is a part of the post office specially selected for the purpose. A Philatelic counter is functioning in each Head Post Office. These counters, however, do not provide special cancellation on F.D.Cs or special covers, but a standard cancellation of "First Day of Issue" only, which is similar for all the philatelic issues. These counters offer registration facility for opening of Philatelic Deposit Account with supply of material by the parent bureau.
- 3. Authorised Offices:** The authorized office is a post office, which sells philatelic items but does not provide any special cancellation. These offices are specially authorized by the Heads of Circles to sell philatelic items in addition to philatelic bureaux and philatelic counters.
- 4. Commemorative/Special stamps:** Stamps, covers or postal stationery issued to commemorate an event, an institution, a theme, flora or fauna and personages, are called commemorative/special stamps. These are usually printed in limited numbers and are sold for a limited period from philatelic bureaux/counters/authorized offices. These are printed only once, unlike definitive postage stamps, so as to ensure their value as collectibles in accordance with universal practice. They are however, not intended to supersede the current definitive stamps, and are generally purchased by the philatelists for their collections. These can be used for payment of postage also apart from being collectible items.
- 5. Albums:** From time to time, albums are prepared by the Philately Division of the Directorate and the philatelic bureaux for presentation purposes and stamp release functions. There are different types of albums, one of, which is prepared at the time of release of a new special/commemorative stamp/special cover.
- 6. Collector's Packs:** Collector's packs contain a set of all the commemorative/special stamps issued by the Department during the year. These are put on sale at Philatelic Bureaux and can be made available at philatelic counters and authorized offices on request. These are made in limited quantity.

7. **Thematic Packs:** The Department issues from time to time a set of two or more stamps on particular themes. Small packs are prepared containing these stamps and are placed on sale at Philatelic Bureaux so that all the stamps issued on a theme are available in one pack. These can be supplied through philatelic counters/authorized offices if requested for.
8. **List of India Postage Stamps:** The list contains information on definitive as well as special/commemorative stamps including service stamps. List of India postage stamps issued since 1947 is put on sale at Philatelic Bureaux at the price fixed by the Department.
9. **Posters/Filters:** The Department periodically issues publicity leaflets which are known as filters for free distribution to the philatelists/collectors in order to give advance publicity to the proposed stamps to be issued. Sometimes various posters are issued by the Department to give publicity to the forthcoming stamps as well as to popularize the hobby of stamp collection amongst the people. These are to be displayed prominently in Philatelic Bureaux/Counters and other important Post Offices as soon as they are received.
10. **Newsletter:** A newsletter is published by the Postal Department periodically. These newsletters contain information about the stamp as well as future issues of commemorative/special stamps, special covers, cancellations as also the holding of exhibitions. This is supplied on request to individuals, philatelic clubs/societies, philatelic stamp dealers, stamp collector, etc. of the country and abroad free of charge.
11. **Definitive Issues:** These are stamps specifically issued for day to day postal needs and placed on sale for an unlimited period. They are distinct from commemorative issues and are available in several denominations. The definitives are printed in huge numbers. By and large it can be said that the definitives are normally so designed as to cost the minimum expenditure in their manufacture, storage and sale. A number of definitive series on themes relevant to the country's heritage and progress in various fields have been brought out.
12. **First Day Cover (FDC):** A cover with the stamp franked with special cancellation of the day of issue is brought out along with a commemorative/special postage stamp. This is put on sale on the day of release of the stamp. It can either be sent through post on the first day of its release or can be retained for philatelic collection. First day covers can also be brought out on the issue or reissue of definitive stamps.
13. **Special Cover:** An event which is not important enough to be commemorated by issue of commemorative/special stamp or for which a stamp cannot be accommodated in the annual issue programme may be commemorated by the department by issue of special covers which can be cancelled with a special cancellation at the post office selected for the purpose. Such covers can also be issued at the instance of private parties on payment of requisite charges. These covers should bear minimum postage stamps of any kind equivalent to the minimum inland letter mail

rate. Heads of the Circles are the competent authority to sanction special covers commemorating any event / institutions / inaugural flight under their jurisdiction.

- A.** The proponent will provide the following details/material to the Head of Circle for consideration of the proposal.
- i) The proposed date of issue.
 - ii) Proposed design for the special cover.
 - iii) Proposed sale price of the cover.
 - iv) Quantity of covers.
 - v) Name (s) of the Post Office (s) or / and the venue from where such special covers are to be issued.
- B.** The Design of the special cover should be restricted to the left half of the cover and should not impinge upon the address portion of the cover. The legend on the cover should mention only the name of the event/occasion being commemorated in Hindi and English.
- C.** The size of the special cover should be one of the sizes prescribed by the Department for letter envelopes. Postal Guide Inland Services issued by Department of Posts can be referred to by the Circles in this regard. **(11 x 22 cms, 13 x 22 cms, 16 x 24.3 cms)**
- D.** The Design of the special cover should be of secular nature and should be devoid of any nuances which may cause embarrassment to Government.
- E.** The sale price of the special cover should not exceed Rs.5/- excluding the cost of the postage stamp to be affixed on the cover. The denomination of the postage stamp should be equivalent to the minimum inland letter mail rate, except in the case of first flight covers between two countries when the denomination should be equivalent to the minimum foreign letter mail.
- F.** The special covers will be printed by the proponent strictly as per the design approved by the Head of Circle. The proponent will hand over all such covers printed to the office of CPMG/PMG.
- G.** The Circle Office will hand over all the covers to the concerned post office for sale at the venue of release. All the sale proceeds of these special covers at the rate approved by Head of Circle will be given to the proponent by the Circle Office alongwith the balance of unsold special covers.
- H.** The proponent will supply to the Circle Office at his own cost 10 special covers duly cancelled within 10 days from the date of issue, for record purpose. The Circle Office will forward 5 of these

covers to Director(Philately) for keeping them in the National Philatelic Museum. In addition, the proponent will, if necessary, arrange distribution of special covers to the VIPs attending the release function as well as used in the presentation albums at their own cost, as the Department does not organize such functions.

- I. Directorate will continue to approve all such proposals for special covers which have a bearing on the diplomatic relations of India with other countries.
 - J. Every case approved by the Head of Circle would be intimated to the Directorate so that action may be taken to publicise the event for the benefit of philatelists all over the country through Newsletter/Website.
 - K. The special cover may preferably be printed by offset process using maplitho paper of 120 GSM.
 - L. The proponents will deposit 200 blank covers with the Philatelic Bureau which issues the special cancellation. These will be put up for sale for a period of one month from the date of release, at the price fixed by the Department and the amount realized from sale of such covers will be deposited to government account.
 - M. The unsold covers should be returned to the proponent after the expiry of one month from the date of release. The Bureau will circulate information regarding the availability of the cover to all the Philatelic Bureaux in advance, preferably two weeks before the date of release.
14. **First Flight Cover:** The cover which is carried on the inaugural mail flight between two points by an airline and which bears the marks of the two places is called First Flight Cover.
15. **Brochure:** Whenever any commemorative/special stamp is issued, a publicity brochure is also brought out. It contains a brief write-up on the subject, designs and also the technical data of the stamp. In addition, the names of the designers of the stamp, first day cover and cancellation are also indicated therein.
16. **Cachet:** It is a cancellation device which is usually impressed with a hand stamp canceller on a cover to denote the date of the special event on which it was provided e.g., important occasions, personages, inaugural flights or expeditions etc. It can also be impressed with the help of a mechanical device for neat cancellation. The cachets are withdrawn from the philatelic bureau immediately after four weeks of the occasion is over.

The cancellation cachet are procured by the Heads

17. **Pictorial cancellation:** These are permanent, regular date cancellations provided at any Post Office located at a place of tourist attraction. It normally features the major tourist attraction of the place. The Head of Circle is empowered to approve this cancellation.

18. **Mint Sheet:** It is a full sheet of unused stamps without any post mark.
19. **Exhibits:** It is an album sheet of standard size 23 x 29 cm in white or off-white colour without any margin. All exhibits must be mounted on standard loose-leaf quadrille album pages, and enclosed in transparent protective covers of sufficient firmness. Exhibits mounted on other than specified pages, do not, meet the requirements of model regulations for state/circle level philatelic exhibitions, and will not be displayed in such exhibitions.
20. Stamps come in Issue Sheets comprising, generally, 20 to 50 stamps, depending upon the size of the stamp. Anything below that number is a sheetlet in the strictest sense of the term. However, for the sake of specification, various names like Miniature Sheet, Souvenir Sheet, Stamp Sheetlet and Stamp Booklet are attached to the products.
- (i) **Miniature Sheet:** A Miniature Sheet is a sheetlet comprising of one or more postally valid stamps with which the issue concerns. Its size normally varies from 75 sq. cms. to 250 sq. cms. depending upon the subject illustration, size of the stamp and number of stamps. The outer area of the miniature sheet beyond perforations of the stamp, depicts an extension of the theme of the stamp or an elaboration of the same and is of complimentary nature. The price of the Miniature Sheet may be equal to the face value of the stamp (s) it comprises of or more, as decided by the Department considering the merit of every case and in that case, the denomination is reflected in the Miniature Sheet. A special feature of a miniature sheet is the zigzag perforation where the sheet is comprised of two or more stamps. However, this feature may not be available in every case. The date of release may be the same as that of the stamp (s) or a specially appointed one.
- (ii) **Souvenir Sheet:** It is also a sheetlet like the miniature sheet, with the exception that it is the Issue itself, i.e., while a miniature sheet is issued on stamps separately produced and sold, the Souvenir Sheet is the only product and no separate stamp is sold; therefore, the number of stamps equals the print quantity of the Souvenir Sheet e.g. Mother Teresa.
- (iii) **Stamp Sheetlet:** A sheetlet of stamps is a smaller version of a full issue sheet of stamps. It generally contains 16 to 20 stamps. It also has, like the Miniature Sheet, complementary illustrations/elaborations and inscriptions. The primary aim of producing a sheetlet is to meet the demand of the philatelist/collectors for a sheet of stamps of manageable size. However, it is not necessary to bring out sheetlets on every occasion of issues. The price of a sheetlet is invariably the sum of the face value of the stamps it is comprised of.
- (iv) **Stamp Booklet:** It is intended to be made of suitable size to facilitate a customer who needs to go to Post Offices off & on to purchase stamps for postage. It, therefore, is necessarily related to definitive stamps. A booklet may contain a strip of, say, 20 stamps or less tucked inside the booklet's inner fold by gumming the salvage of the specially produced strip. The

outer cover may have illustrations and detailed inscriptions. It may be priced at the face value of the stamps it contains.

21. **National Philatelic Museum:** Each postage stamp is a carefully designed piece of miniature art which speaks evocatively about the subject depicted on it. India has brought out beautiful stamps covering different facets of this great country. The National Philatelic Museum, New Delhi, attempts to showcase the great Indian panorama as presented through its postage stamps. Located in Dak Bhavan, Sansad Marg, New Delhi, the Museum houses all Indian stamps issued since Independence. The main display is the chronological series in which all the commemorative/special stamps issued by the Department of Posts have been presented. Blow-ups of stamps as well as stamp-designs painted by children add colour to the Museum. Exhibits prepared by accomplished philatelists are kept on display from time to time, exposing the visitor to some of the treasures of philately in the country. The process of designing and printing of postage stamps have also been displayed in serialized exhibits. In addition, the Museum provides information with regard to the Postal History of India as well as India's Philatelic Heritage. A unique wealth of items is thus available for view in the Museum. The sale counter at the Museum offers the latest postage stamps, First Day Covers and other philatelic material.

22. **Meghdoot Postcard:** Meghdoot Post Card is a variant of normal post cards and was introduced by Business Development Directorate of the Department as a premium product w.e.f. 1st September 2002. The space for writing on address side is utilized for multi-colour advertisements of different products and services by the clients at a fixed rate determined from time to time. The client also indicates the territory of release or circulation of the Meghdoot Post Cards. In addition to territories designated by the client, limited numbers of Meghdoot Post Cards are available for sale from seven selected Philatelic Bureaux authorized for sale of new postal stationery.

23. **Perforation:** A series of holes punched along the boundaries of the stamps in the sheet to facilitate separation of the stamp from each other.

PHILATELIC BUREAUX AND COUNTERS

24. Philatelic Bureaux are established by the Heads of Circles on orders issued by the the Directorate. The pre-requisites for the establishment of a Philatelic Bureau are the expected sale of philatelic items, namely commemorative/special postage stamps, first day covers, information sheets, collector packs, special philatelic packs, philatelic publications and covers etc. Besides the demand for philatelic issues and items, existence of philatelic societies and clubs in a particular place are also considered before opening of a Philatelic Bureau. Heads of the Circles, before sending a proposal for opening a bureau are, therefore, required to give the sale figures of philatelic items for the preceding six months, and the number of clubs/societies working at the stations. Normally a new philatelic bureau is not opened unless a philatelic counter has been working satisfactorily in a particular station.
25. Philatelic counters are functioning at all the Head Post Offices, Head of the Circle is competent to open a philatelic counter at any Sub Post Office in his jurisdiction after he is personally satisfied with the necessity of opening such a counter. The following guidelines may be kept in view while examining proposal for opening of philatelic counters.
- (i) The place should be a very important/tourist centre;
 - (ii) There should be a popular demand from the public/philatelists;
 - (iii) There should be considerable number of philatelic clubs/societies;
 - (iv) The proposed office should have accessibility by Air/Train, etc;
 - (v) The office should be an important sub post office;
 - (vi) The average monthly sale from the authorized office which is proposed to be converted into a philatelic counter may not be less than Rs.10,000/-.
26. **Distinction between a Philatelic Bureau and a Philatelic Counter:** Philatelic Bureaux and counters are not independent offices but are part and parcel of the Post Office. Philatelic Bureaux are preferably established in Head Post Offices located at Circle headquarters, district towns and Sub Post Offices where considered necessary. Where the opening of a bureau is not found justified, a philatelic counter may be opened in a departmental Sub Post Office. While bureaux do all philatelic functions and supply philatelic items to dependent counters and to Post Offices specially authorized by Heads of the Circles, the philatelic counters do philatelic work in a restricted way. They are not authorized to issue special cancellation. The philatelic counters offer the facility of registration of Philatelic Deposit Account with material to be supplied by the parent bureau. It is also not

authorized to accept mail orders. It is however, allowed to provide "first day of issue" cancellation on first day covers. For this purpose it is provided with permanent cancellation stamp with changeable dates. Authorised offices only sell commemorative/special stamps, blank first day covers and information sheets.

27. Functions of Philatelic Bureaux: Philatelic Bureaux are under the technical and administrative control of the Postmaster. In the case of philatelic counters, they are under the administrative control of the respective postmasters whereas for technical purpose they are under the control of the bureaux on which they are dependent for the supplies of philatelic articles viz. stamps, first day covers, information sheets, etc.

27.1 The major functions of Philatelic Bureaux are to receive and sell:-

- Commemorative/special postage stamps and philatelic ancillaries.
- Definitive postage stamps on their first day of issue/re-issue.
- First day covers and special covers.
- Information sheets.
- New postal stationery with advertisement.
(Stationery with advertisement will be sold only through the Philatelic Bureau at Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai & Sansad Marg, New Delhi for a period of one month from the date of release or till the stock lasts, whichever is earlier)
- Other items like mini/souvenir sheets, collectors packs, etc.

27.2 In addition, the bureaux also:

- (i) Provide special cancellations on the first day of issue.
- (ii) Supply philatelic stamps and its ancillaries to all the philatelic counters in its technical jurisdiction (as mentioned in above para) before the day of release.
- (iii) Supply of material to PDA holders registered at philatelic counters.
- (iv) Operate an imprest sanctioned by the Head of the Circle for getting supply of stamps from the treasury for sale at the counter.
- (v) Maintain Philatelic Deposit Accounts.

- (vi) Execute mail orders of philatelic stamps, FDCs & brochures, etc.
- (vii) Comply with bulk sale of mint stamps.
- (viii) Assist philatelists, stamp dealers, collectors and members of public for supply of information about the latest issues and their connected information.
- (ix) Maintain a philatelic library.
- (x) Open extension counter at stamp release functions especially organized by the Heads of the Circles and others.
- (xi) Assist the Head of the Circles, Regional Directors and Superintendents of Post Offices in organizing philatelic exhibitions, seminars, workshops, etc.
- (xii) Adopt measure for sale of philatelic materials under the instructions of the Heads of the Circles.
- (xiii) Submit periodical statement showing the sale of commemorative/special postage stamps and other philatelic materials and numbers of P.D. Accounts. Any other item of philatelic work entrusted by the Head of the Circle.
- (xiv) Maintain a register showing the names and address of philatelic clubs and societies and also reputed philatelists of the town.
- (xv) Keep the catalogue of stamps updated by making entry of each stamp(commemorative/definitive) as and when issued.

28. Display of stamps in the Philatelic Bureau: It is essential that the stamps and first day covers issued by the department are chronologically arranged and kept in an album as reference materials for the benefit of customers and philatelists.