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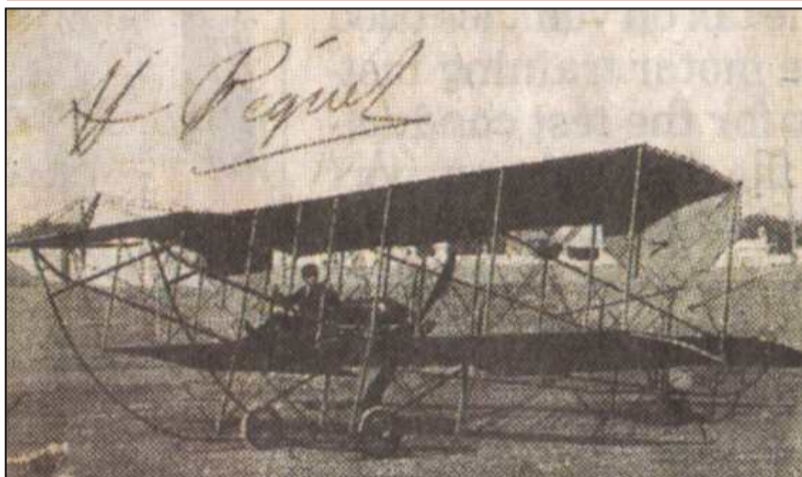
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World's 1st Airmail took off in India



The historic event of the world's first aircraft taking off with a mail bag took place in Allahabad on February 18, 1911, coinciding with the Kumbh Mela that year!



The British first conceived the postal service and the Wright Brothers in the US flew the first plane. But it was in India that letters were taken by air for the first time in the world.

The historic event took place in **Allahabad** on **February 18, 1911**, coinciding with the Kumbh Mela that year. Watched by over a lakh people, a special aircraft took off from the bank off the Yamuna at 5.30 pm, crossed the river and landed along the Naini junction, a distance of 15 km, close to the Central Prison on the outskirts of Allahabad, according to records. The venue was an agricultural and trade fair called 'UP Exhibition' on the bank of the Yamuna. It was organized by authorities to garner additional gate collection for the exhibition by displaying two flying machines. The aircraft were imported by some British officials in knocked-down condition and were re-assembled at the venue.

Colonel Y Wyndham, the event promoter, approached the postal authorities for sending some mail bags for the first time by air. The Surveyor General, then chief of Postal Services in India, readily obliged and even approved issuance of a special cachet to commemorate the occasion. It had the inscription '**First Aerial Post**' and '**UP Exhibition Allahabad**'. The organizers were keen on the light weight that could be carried by the aircraft which had wooden wings and structured linked by ropes. Each letter was restricted to a maximum weight of one ounce and with careful calculation, only a limited number of letters, only 6,500, was allowed in the mail bag.

It took 13 minutes for the journey and the letters from Naini junction were sent to their respective destinations by surface mail. The historic event had another historical twist: One of the participants at the exhibition grounds was **Motilal Nehru**, who had mailed a letter to his son **Jawaharlal Nehru** when he was a student in England at that time!

210) George V, Rs. 100, Madras, signed J. W. Kelly, About Very Fine. Realized- Rs. 1,90,000

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207) British India, George V, Rupee 1, signed J. W. Kelly, Fine+. Realized- Rs. 2,00,000

Highlights of Ahmedabad Auction # 42

17) Guptas, Kumaragupta I, Gold, Dinar, Tiger-Slayer type, Very Fine+, Extremely Rare. Realized- Rs. 3,50,000

69) Tipu Sultan, Gold, Double Pagoda, Patan Mint, About Extremely Fine, Great Rarity. Realized- Rs. 3,85,000

119) Victoria Queen, Gold, 10 Rupees, 1870, Calcutta Mint, Restrike-Proof, Extremely Rare. Realized- Rs. 2,45,000

195) Viceroy's Presentation Medal for Rifle Shooting, Very Fine. Realized- Rs. 1,40,000

An Interesting South Indian Copper Coin

By Amol N. Bankar

Last year, I bought this copper coin from eBay. The exact find-spot of this coin is not known. I did not find it in published varieties by Mitchiner¹ and Ganesh². On *prima facie* examination, it is clear that probably this coin is later or post Vijayanagara issue. Obverse of the coin has an image of a dancing deity, with hood of a seven-headed snake over its head, subjugating head of another snake and holding tail of snake in his left hand. It is possible that this figure may represent the portrayal of 'Kāliyā Mardana' (subjugation of snake Kāliyā), a famous event from 'Kriśna Katha' (stories on Lord Kriśna's life) which is narrated in *Bhagavata* (part X, chapter 15-17), the same is also depicted at *Mahābalipuram* and in Nepal.³ As Kriśna and his 'Bāl-lilā' were much loved subject of Vijayanagara and post Vijayanagara art, it is possible that the issuer had adopted portrayal of this story on his coinage. Also there is one more interpretation that this particular depiction may represent a local deity related with snake worship and same is seated on snake-seat. The Nāgari legend on reverse is so crude and illegible that it is difficult to decipher the name of the ruler and assign a particular time-frame. The photograph and the details of coins are as under.

Copper, 2.25 g, 12x11 mm

Obv: Dancing deity with hood of seven headed snake over its head, head of another snake encircling the deity and holding tail of snake in his left hand. Or the depicted deity is related with snake worship and same is seated on snake-seat.

Rev: Illegible Nāgari legend.



Bibliography

1. Michael Mitchiner (1998): *The coinage and history of Southern India*, Hawkins Publications, London.
2. K. Ganesh (2002): *Coins of Tāmilnādu*, Published by K.Ganesh, Bangalore.
3. P. Banerjee (1978): *The life of Krishna in Indian Art*, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, New Delhi, p. 12.
4. I am grateful to Dr. Dilip Rajgor for editing this article.

Photo Feature



Mr. Manilal Kanji Chheda of Pune exhibited his exclusive collection of Bank Notes and Stamps of India at Napu Hall, Matunga, **Mumbai** on **20-21 Feb 2010**.

The show was widely publicized and attended chiefly by the local Kutchi-Gujarati populace and took keen interest in the hobby. **Mr. Shashikant Gangar** made arrangements of 15 stalls of coins, notes and books.

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Invest in Gold for Good Returns

By Prabhakar Sinha, TNN

Diversification of the investment portfolio provides security during the uncertain period. Despite the fact that Indian economy and companies were doing well, the stock markets fell sharply in 2008 because of the global turmoil, leading to huge losses to equity investors.

The global downturn had affected investment scenario in many areas, apart from equities. However, in the long run, if one continues with his investments, the losses could be recovered. But to remain on the safer side, experts advise that one should diversify in other assets classes.

Gold has emerged as one of the most important investment avenues in the last couple of years. It has given a handsome return of around 34% in the last one year, when most other assets have depreciated or gave smaller returns in the range of 8 to 10%.

Since 1999, when the central banks of developed countries decided to sell a limited amount of their gold reserve every year to avoid sharp fall in the yellow metals prices, it had started moving up. In the global market, its price went up from \$251 per ounce in July 1999 to around \$1,180 per ounce (1 ounce is equivalent to 31.1 gram) at present.

The development in the last one year has further added to the glitter of gold. With the weakening of the US economy, it is feared that dollar may lose its prime position as a global currency in the international trade. The apprehension is that dollar may depreciate against the major currencies like euro and yen in times to come.

This has made many central banks to think to diversify their reserves portfolio and to invest a part of their foreign currencies in the yellow metal. In the last couple of years, China has increased their gold from IMF. After this, Sri Lankan central bank also invested a part of their reserve in gold.

These developments have given an additional shine to the yellow metals. Still, experts feel that one should not invest more than 10% of his portfolio in gold. Any new monetary development might affect the present trend.

My Shop

Though in my shop I sit and wait,
From break of dawn till time is late,

My anguished heart doth heave a sigh,
For people passing, laughing by,
They first look at my window, neat,
And then at me upon my seat,
And on their face their thoughts to me,
Show wonder if I am crazy.

With all those coins upon my brain,
They really think that I'm insane.

And every now and then I see,
Some gray haired mother come to me,
With purse of coins, as if of gold,
In trembling voice wish to be told,
But I explain all that I can,
And show them coins from every land,
Still some do think that I'm a nut,
While others praise and thank me a lot.

I try my best to let them see,
Its not the age, but scarcity.

As ceaseless months and years roll by,
And I sit there and wonder why,
All people that do pass me by,
Do not collect, as you and I.

- Contributed by Kanti Kumar Sevak

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Coins of Bassein

By Pascal R. Lopes

Vasco da Gama, the famous Portuguese explorer, first visited India in 1498. Portugal seized control of a number of islands and small enclaves on the west coast of India, and for next hundred years enjoyed a monopoly on trade. With the arrival of powerful Dutch and English fleets in the first half of the 17th century, Portuguese power in the area declined until virtually all of the India that remained under Portuguese control where the west coast enclaves of Goa, Damao and Diu. They were forcibly annexed by India in 1962.

Vasai known as **Bassein** by the English and **Bacaim** by the Portuguese is located less than 30 miles north of Bombay on the Gulf of Cambay. In 1611, the Portuguese opened a mint at Bacaim, which mint was situated in the Bassein Fort. Many issues for Bacaim were in conjunction with other Portuguese settlements. All the coins minted in Bassein had a mint mark of "B". However, the British took Bacaim in 1780.

Coins that were minted and circulated in Bacaim in the Portuguese era were Xerafies, Bazarucos, Parado and Rupia. These coins generally had Crowned arms divided by the mint mark and the other side has a cross and the date.

Around 1738 to 1740, Chimaji Appa arrived in Bacaim and took control of Bacaim with the support of the British. Marathas started minting their own coins. The typically known coins circulated by the Marathas in the area of Bassein and around were Paisa. These coins had *Shashti* written on it indicating they were minted in Sashti and had a trishul and the year of mintage.

Once Bombay was handed over as dowry by the Portuguese to the British, the British took control of the entire area and from then onwards minting activities started in Bombay. Standard coins got circulated all over the country including Bassein where there was direct British rule. British had following coins in circulation: Rupee, ½ Rupee, ¼ Rupee, and Anna in different denominations.

After independence of India, coins minted by the Republic of India were circulated all over India including Vasai. These were Pice, Anna and Rupee (4 = Anna, 64 Pice or 16 Anna = 1 Rupee). In 1957, the Republic of India made decisions to use decimal coinage and since then the denominations in the country used are Paisa and Rupee (100 Paisa = 1 Rupee).

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Photo Feature



Mr. Anuj Saxena (President, Uttaranchal Numismatic, Philatelic & Art Society) organized an exhibition of coins and notes from 18th Jan to 5th Feb at Dehradun. It was inaugurated by Hon. Harbans Kapoor, Speaker of the Uttaranchal State Assembly.



Jabalpur Coin & Philatelic Society organized their Coin and philatelic exhibition at Jabalpur. Hon. Ishwardas Rohani and Hon. Ashutosh Shrivastav (Vice Chancellor, Rani Durgawati University) were the Chief Guests.

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Coinex 2010 Ahmedabad: Keeping Alive the Flame of Numismatics

The Gujarat Coin Society successfully organized its 8th Annual Competitive Coin Exhibition from 12-14 Feb. 2010 at Ahmedabad. Under the able leadership of **Shri Praful Thakkar** and **Shri Harish D. Shah**, the Society exhibited ideal teamwork that resulted in a splendid numismatic show.

The exhibition was inaugurated by lighting the traditional lamp at the hands of **Shri P. Basu**, IAS, Ex-Additional Chief Secretary of Gujarat State. More than 45 Stalls and hundreds of numismatists from all parts of the country visited the show.

The competitive coin exhibition was judged by Shri R. D. Bhatt, Shri Prashant Kulkarni and Dr. Dilip Rajgor. More than 20 entries exhibited various forms of numismatics. The best three entries were: The **1st Prize Todywalla Auctions Trophy** was awarded to **Mr. Avinash Ramteke** for his exhibit on the *Coins of Gond Kings of Deogarh*; the **2nd Prize Oswal Auctions Trophy** was presented to **Mr. Sanjay Mishra** for his entry on the *Jewels of Numismatics*; and the **3rd Prize Gujarat Coin Society Trophy** was awarded to **Mr. G. Hemanth Chopra** for his collection of the *coins of the Indo-French*. **Best of the Category Awards** were given to: **Shri Anil Choksi** (*Ancient coins*); **Shri Umesh Bahri** (*Indian Princely States*); **Ms. Megha Agarwal** (*Coins of European Rulers*); **Mr. Om Prakash Agarwal** (*Coin of republic of India*); **Mr. Rohan Bahri** (*Modern World Coins*); **Shri Himanshu (Gopalbhai) Soni** (*Indian Currency Notes*); **Mr. Janak Shah** (*Medals*); and **Shri Kantilal Prajapati** (*Fancy Numbers on notes*).

The Society honoured a number of individuals for their contribution to Indian Numismatics. These were: Shri Parikh Saheb, Praful Thakkar, Farokh Todywalla, Girish J. Veera, R. T. Somaiya, Dr. Dilip Rajgor, Parag Tripathi, Arvind Chandra, Harish D. Dr. Tejus Naik, Basti Solanki, Shah, Jagdish Gandhi, Javerilal M. Rajgor, Shatrughan Jain, P D Jain, Ramnikbhai Parekh, Maganbhai Morbiwala, Hajibhai, Samir Panchal, Ranchodbhai Patel, and Prof. Kishor Pathak.

Another milestone of the Gujarat Coin Society is to have its own premises at Ahmedabad. **Shri Harishbhai Shah**, President of the Society took the lead in this endeavor and managed all the resources for the same.



Abdul Razak Shaikh



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Down the Memory Lane ...

Memoirs of Jagdish Agarwal - Part 1

I am thankful to **Dr. Shailendra Bhandare** for suggesting me to introduce "history of numismatic activities in cities like Mumbai or Calcutta. It needs to be documented, lest personalities like Coachman, Bhikji, Shuklaji or even Sashtikar in Chor Bazaar will be forgotten".

So being historians ourselves, it is our duty to preserve such memoirs, anecdotes, pictures and record papers, envelopes, etc. of the golden era when coins were available at metal prices and coin collection was just a hobby.

I am thankful to **Jagdishbabu** for accepting my invitation to pen his memoirs and present the by-gone days in pictorial way (*Dilip*).



Jagdish Agarwal with Mr. Stan Goron

Introduction:

I passed my Higher Secondary in 1962. Later on I joined a college in the morning and attended my father's export business in day time. My father was exporter of Indian handicraft and musical instruments. One of his clients, Mr. Paul Telco of India Craft Limited, London had seven departmental stores of Indian handicraft in the U.K., and one each in France, Germany and Italy. Each store had stamps and coin stalls. Since I was collecting Stamps and coins from my school days, my father gave me free-hand to export stamps and coins to Mr. Telco. I used to visit bullion market to buy coins, where I met many collectors, made friends and started local coin dealing also.

Bullion Market:

At that time coins were available in large quantity and at almost metal price. Shopkeepers used to buy one Tola silver coins at Rs. 3.50 and sell at Rs. 4.00. Surprising, they were selling all coins, whether common or rare, Victoria or Zodiac Rupee; all coins were sold at Rs. 4.00 each. So I was purchasing at these coins at Rs. 4 and selling at Rs. 5 to collectors.

Coin Collectors:

In those days, there were 40-50 collectors in Calcutta. Collectors like the late H.P. Poddar, Narendra Singhee, Bijoy Singh Nahar and N.S. Duggar were collecting coins since 1945 and had rich collection but hardly any numismatic knowledge. Some collectors like Mr. G.S. Beed, Parimal Roy, Bani Bhusan Chakravorty, Robin Choudhury and Vasant Choudhry started their coins collection in 1960 and had built good collection as well as also knowledge.

Scholars:

Prof. A.N. Lahiri, Bela Lahiri, B.N. Mukherjee, K.K. Dasgupta, R.C. Majumdar (the great historian), D.C. Sircar and Roma Neogi were the internationally reputed scholars. It is peculiar that except Dr. Roma Neogi and Dr. Lahiri no one collected coins. Collectors used to visit them regularly for deciphering and for guidance.

Coin Catalogues:

Collectors were dependent on museum catalogs but they were not freely available. I was the one who imported *Modern Coins of the World*, 6th edition by R.S. Yeoman (1850-1960) and *Coins of the World (1750-1850)* by Craig for Indian collectors.

Coin Dealers in India:

I was the first coin dealer in Kolkata. In 1966-67 some more dealers entered the scene but there were only 13-14 coin dealers in the whole of India. Prominent among them were: Mr. Krishna Prodhan (Darjeeling), Mr. K.C. Jain (the father of Rakesh, Rajesh and Rajneesh Jain of Delhi), Santosh Kumar (New Delhi) Mr. N. Sengar (Kanpur), Mr. C.M. Desai & Mr. Babu Rupani (Rajkot), Mr. R.D. Shah (Kutch), Mr. Coachman, Shri S. M. Shuklaji, Mr. Natubahi Mehta and Mr. M.G. Shah (Mumbai). Before my entry in the coin field, many collectors were buying coins from Mr. Coachman and Shuklaji by post. These two dealers were sending their price lists to collectors. By looking at their price lists and the details of coins written on the envelopes, I was much impressed and decided to visit Mumbai in search of more adventures in coins.

Trip to Mumbai:

In 1965, I visited Mumbai and met Mr. Coachman and Shuklaji. Both the gentlemen were very gentle, humble and had a great numismatic knowledge. Shuklaji's house was the meeting place for coin collectors where I met many collectors and made them my customers.

Mumbai Coin Market:

While I was selling Rupee size silver coins at Rs. 5 each, in Mumbai each coin had different price. For example Alwar Victoria Rs. 7, Bikanir Victoria at Rs. 6, Ganga Singh Bust at Rs. 8, 1939 Rupee at Rs. 40, Zodiac Coins from Rs. 50 to 70, and so on.

Mumbai Paper Money collectors:

Unlike Kolkata, there were many Paper Money collectors in Mumbai. In 1972-73, I purchased a big lot of 2-½ Rupee notes in UNC condition, and several booklets of George V 1 Rupee note (both sizes) and sold most of them to Mumbai coin collectors (Soli Icewalla, Pervez Patel, Pukhraj Surana and many others) at Rs. 70 each. Interestingly, when in September 2009, I attended Mumbai Coin Society show and met Soli Icewalla, he introduced me to his friends and proudly said "this is the gentleman, who sold Pervez and me 2-½ Rupee notes at Rs. 70". I am glad my friends like Soli still remember me for this.

- Jagdish Agarwal (jagarwalin@yahoo.co.in)

To be continued ...

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A man is known by:
 the **company** he keeps; the **language** he speaks;
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 - the late **Shri Bhupatsimhaji of Kutch**
 (as told to Mr. R. K. Maheshwari)

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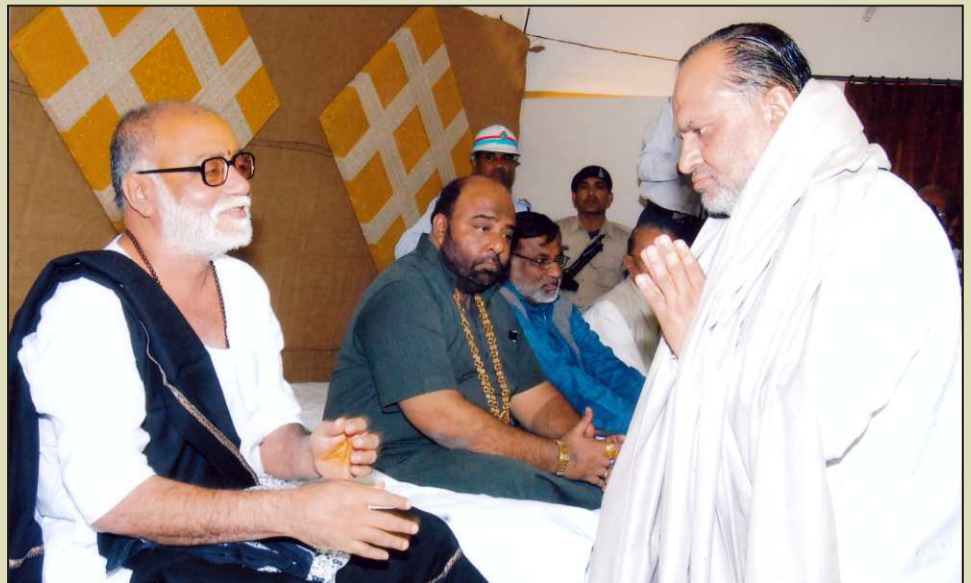
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Photo Feature



Shri Parimal Rupani, the Professional Numismatist from Junagadh, is being honoured by **Hon. St. Morari Babu**, the eminent Ramayan Story-teller, on 11th February 2010 at Junagadh.

Parimal has been a researcher on the history of Junagadh and contributed a lot of articles in Gujarati. Parimal's latest Gujarati booklet on the Biography of Diwan Anant Amarchand Vasavada, the then Diwan of Junagadh State, was released on the occasion. Among the dignitaries present were, **Hon. Morari Babu**, **Dy. Collector Shri Parmar**; **Dy. Mayor Shri Girish Kotecha**; **Shri Bhikhudan Gadhvi** and **Shri Narottam Palan**.

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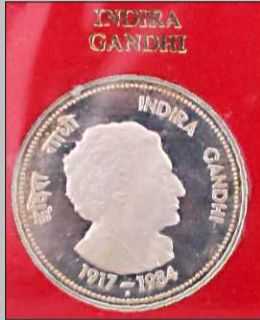
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New Coins of Perarignar Anna Centenary 1909-1969

By Ravindra Jain "Suman"



The Reserve Bank of India will shortly put into circulation coins of Rs. 5/- denomination issued by Government of India on the occasion of the Birth Centenary of "Perarignar Anna". The technical details are:



Nickel Brass (copper 75%, zinc 20%, nickel 5%), 23 mm, circular, 100 serrations

Obv: Lion Capital of Ashoka Pillar with value in English and Hindi.

Rev: Perarignar Anna Centenary * 1909-1969 * and the bust to right.

Il Shree Gajanan Prasanna II



0.520 g



0.510 g



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Calendar of Events 2010

Month	Date	Place	Event	Venue
March	6	Mumbai	Museum Coin Show	Dinesh Mody Numismatic Museum, University Kalina Campus, Santacruz (E), Mumbai 400098
March	27-28	Tirupati	XX th Annual Conference	South Indian Numismatic Society
April	3	Mumbai	Museum Coin Show	Dinesh Mody Numismatic Museum
April	22	Mumbai	Oswal Fair	Oswal Auctions, Tejpal Galleries, Gowalia Tank, Grant Road, Mumbai
April	23-24	Mumbai	Shukla Day	19th Shukla Day Coin Fair, Todywalla Auctions, Tejpal Galleries, Gowalia Tank, Grant Road, Mumbai
May	1	Mumbai	Museum Coin Show	Dinesh Mody Numismatic Museum
May	1-3	Coimbatore	Coimbatore Coin Exhibition 2010	Shri Coimbatore Gujarati Samaj, 500 Mettupalayam Road, Coimbatore 641002
May	14-15	London	Joint Seminar of ONS & NSI	Oriental Numismatic Society & Numismatic Society of India, British Museum, London
June	5	Mumbai	Museum Coin Show	Dinesh Mody Numismatic Museum
July	3	Mumbai	Museum Coin Show	Dinesh Mody Numismatic Museum
July	9-11	Nagercoil	Kumaripex 2010	Kanyakumari District Philatelic & Numismatic Association, Valanar Thirumana Mandapam, Assisi Campus, Nagercoil (cell: 9843154344)

Booking for Coin Sets of Homi Bhabha Birth Centenary Year 2009

The India Government Mint, Mumbai has made arrangements for the sale of Commemorative Coin Sets in Proof & UNC varieties released on the occasion of Homi Bhabha Birth Centenary Year 2009.

Cost of coin sets to be delivered in India, including Tax/VAT & Postage charges:

1. **Proof coin sets** consisting of above 2 coins = Rs. 2,000/-per set ;
2. **UNC coin sets** consisting of above 2 coins = Rs. 1,400/-per set

The **order form** along with necessary details are available on website www.mumbaimint.in

Booking Period: From 01/02/2010 to 31/03/2010 (for Cash Booking between 10.00 to 12.00 Hrs.)

Delivery: Approximately 6 months from closure of booking.



- Ravi Shankar Sharma

Shri Mahalaxmi



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Indian Rupee to get unique symbol in 2010-2011

The Indian Rupee will this fiscal join the elite league of global currencies like US dollar, British pound and euro that have their unique symbols, Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee said on 26th Feb. 2010.

"In the ensuing year, we intend to formalise a symbol for the Indian Rupee, which reflects and captures the Indian ethos and culture," he announced in his Budget speech in Parliament. "With this, Indian Rupee will join the select club of currencies such as the US dollar, British pound Sterling, euro and Japanese yen that have a clear distinguishing identity," he said.

While these foreign currencies have their own unique symbols, other than their abbreviations like USD and GBP, Rupee is only referred to by the abbreviation '\Rs\''. Moreover, the same abbreviated forms are also in neighbouring countries like Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka rupee.

The decision to have a symbol for Rupee was taken by the government last year. It was also decided to invite designs from the public for the new symbol. The shortlisted designers would present their designs to a seven-member jury, comprising of officials from the government and RBI as also people from institutes like J. J. Institute of Applied Art, National Institute of Design, Lalit Kala Akademi and Indira Gandhi National Centre.

- PTI

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