

#HOBBY

Banglapex 2020 – a haven for stamp collectors

The philatelic scene of Bangladesh is not hyped due to its lack of popularity among the general populace, but upon closer observation, one will realise that it is in fact abuzz with interesting events and activities. The most recent of which is Banglapex 2020 – the fourth national stamp exhibition that is currently being held virtually.

Organised by Bangladesh Philatelic Federation, the event was inaugurated on 19 December, 2020, by our Honourable Telecommunication Minister, Mustafa Jabbar. Although the official results had been published on 30 December, given its virtual nature, anyone can freely view the exhibition in the forthcoming months.

First held in 1984, followed by in 1992, and then after a lengthy gap again in 2019, this is the first virtual stamp exhibition of its kind to include a jury committee who assessed and awarded exhibitors accordingly. On this occasion, new stamps were issued, a first day cover and a special cover along with a couple of postmarks.

The jury consisted of seven members comprising both national and international jurors, who judged participants on the basis of presentation, rarity, knowledge, and condition, among various other criteria. Awards were distributed on various levels ranging from bronze to large vermeil, along with seven special prizes given out to the most deserving exhibitors.

Even non-philatelists would be awestruck by the compelling collection of stamps across 217 'frames' presented at the exhibition, because the category selection is in fact fascinating with some of the best stamp collectors taking part, among a total of 82 participants.

The exhibition consists of myriad categories that contain an impressive assortment of stamps, ranging from 'traditional philately' to 'thematic philately'.



Under the 'postal history' category, the exhibit named "Early Indian Postal Cancellations Victorian Era 1854 – 84" intriguingly displays fragments of history through postmarks and Victorian stamps of India.

Another exhibit named "Postal Stationeries of Independent Bangladesh (since 1972)" shows a copious assemblage

of postcards, envelopes, and aerogrammes that were issued by Bangladesh Post Office after the country's independence, which recaps the country's postal annals since liberation by being a tell-tale of history.

The organising body, Bangladesh Philatelic Federation, has taken the initiative to host such an exhibition

annually in the upcoming years. This not only promotes philately on a national level but does so internationally as well. To be able to participate internationally, one must attend national exhibitions first and this platform creates the scope for philatelists to advance further.

"The philatelic presence of Bangladesh is showing good progress on an international context. Bangladesh has already won two large vermeil awards internationally in two different exhibitions and is on track to receive a gold level award as well," said Mohammed Monirul Islam, Bangladesh Jury Secretary at Banglapex 2020.

Many might argue that the philatelic scenario of Bangladesh is moribund but A T M Anowarul Quadir, Bangladesh National Jury, Secretary, and Exhibition Chief Co-ordinator at Banglapex 2020 begs to differ.

"There exists sufficient philatelic enthusiasm in our country and it is quantifiably evident as new stamps are being issued and sold frequently with a growing number of philatelists," he said.

However, he also voiced his opinion regarding the issuance of stamps stating that to stir more curiosity among people, stamps should be issued covering a broad spectrum of themes to include nature, environment, personality, and architecture that are thought provoking and interestingly convey the country's significance to people.

Albeit stamp collection may seem as a hobby superficially, it is much deeper than that. Stamps hold the power to beautifully narrate stories, allow to preserve history and epoch, provide the opportunity for cultural exchange, and most importantly represent a country's rich story and heritage.

Exhibition link: <http://banglapex.com>

By Fariha Amber

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