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----- STAMPS OF INDIA COLLECTORS COMPANION -----

The First & Only Weekly on Philately & Postal Services of India

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Edited by Madhukar and Savita Jhingan

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Collectors Exchange Stamps Worth Millions  
Now, a stamp for every face!

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<http://www.stampsofindia.com/newssite/Download/archives.htm>

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JHINGANS JOTTINGS

Hi

When we were growing-up it was common to find notices in the cafes that said 'Don't discuss religion and politics here'. We think it was a sound advice then and is still relevant now as well.

This issue's lead story regarding the British Christmas stamps proves the above as the stamps unintentionally offended religious sentiments of many people and were perhaps politically not correct.

India has a strong tradition of religious tolerance and a secular form of government. Hindus recognize God in many forms and the prophets from other religions are also revered and recognized as manifestation of the divine, though not as the singular incarnation of God worshipped by a particular religion.

With a sense of Déjà vu we recall that Vatican's Christmas 1963 set depicted an Indian nativity scene but perhaps the absence of instantaneous news dissemination did not cause a furor then.

We believe that the postal administrations everywhere should be extremely careful while dealing with issues on religious themes. Especially as nowadays we live in world with hundreds of TV Channels, broadband internet connectivity, and constantly buzzing mobile phones.

And no, we will say absolutely nothing about the "un-issued" Indian issue for 400 Years of Guru Granth Saheb.

Until next week, please enjoy the rest of the newsletter.

- M&SJ

Our thanks to the Contributors and Sources to this issue: H P Singh, and O K Prakash.

We invite your inputs, please email to "writeback at stampsofindia.com"

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If you've found this newsletter useful, recommend it to a friend.

Better still, forward a copy of this issue. Also, please mention this newsletter when contacting other philatelists.

Report the philatelic activities in your area for publication here. We shall reimburse the costs incurred on images, philatelic items issued, publications, courier and other agreed charges.

Please send your queries in detail (images welcome) on all matters related to Philately and Postal History of India and Indian States. We will attempt to find an answer for you.

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NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### THE CONTROVERSIAL BRITISH CHRISTMAS STAMPS

The objections and protests by the Hindu Forum of Britain, an umbrella organization of the 260 Hindu organizations in the UK forced Royal Mail to apologize to the Hindu Community and later to partially withdraw one of the stamps from the set of six.

The 68p stamp depicts Madonna and Child, a 17<sup>th</sup> century painting from India of the holy family with St. Anne. The man and woman pictured on the stamp have Hindu markings on their foreheads but are shown worshipping the infant Jesus. Ramesh Kallidai of the Hindu Forum of Britain called the issue of the stamp "insensitive and inappropriate."

The protests started immediately after the stamps were issued on November 1, 2005. Royal Mail responded by apologizing "for any unintentional offence caused to the Hindu community" but refused to withdraw the stamps. Royal Mail also said that it would review its procedures to ensure that future images are screened to avoid unintentional offense to any community in the United Kingdom.

However the Hindu Forum was not satisfied and on November 3, 2005 outlined its planned protests over the stamp, including the mass mailing of letters without stamps to Royal Mail's headquarters in London to clog local post offices.

On November 4, 2005 the Department of Trade & Industry and the Royal Mail held the discussions which resulted in a decision to inform the Post Office branches that "the 68 pence Christmas stamp only be offered when specifically requested by a customer. The standard default issue for 68 pence stamps should be the definitive stamp or any other 68 pence special stamp you have in stock. Please note – no further stocks of this stamp will be issued to branches."

The situation is set to become even stickier for the Royal Mail, however, as it has emerged that exception is also likely to be taken to virtually every stamp in the new set by evangelical Christians. North Antrim DUP Member of the Legislative Assembly Mervyn Storey is one member of that faith who has already sent a letter of complaint. "Each of the Christmas issue depicts an image of a Madonna and child," he said. "This in itself is offensive to the many thousands of mainstream evangelical Christians in Northern Ireland, but this hurt is exacerbated by the fact that on each of the stamps the Madonna figure is presented as having a halo around her head, clearly signifying that she is to be revered." While it may not have been the intention of the Royal Mail, the clear inference to be deduced from these stamps is that the birth of Jesus Christ is a Roman Catholic thing and that the beliefs and feelings of mainstream evangelicals is to be afforded less respect and recognition than those of our Roman Catholic neighbors. "Whatever the intention behind these stamps, this is an unacceptable situation which I know from my discussions with others from within the mainstream evangelical community in Northern Ireland is being viewed as insulting."

Royal Mail (the British Post Office) issued a set of 6 special stamps for Christmas on November 1, 2005. The images of the Madonna and Child for these special stamps were selected by artist Irene von Treskow, award winning designer, illustrator and Anglican priest from European, Haitian, Italian, Indian, Native American and Aboriginal Australian backgrounds. Her idea was to visually depict the Madonna and Child from all five continents.

De La Rue printed the self-adhesive stamps by gravure in sheets of 50. The first-class and the second-class stamp were also produced in booklets of 12 and of 24 stamps respectively. A souvenir sheet including all the six stamps with the regular lick and stick gum was also issued.

The stamp for the domestic second-class (21p) rate is non-denominated. It is inscribed "2<sup>nd</sup>" and features a Black Madonna and Child painting by an unknown artist from the Haitian culture.

The stamp for the domestic first-class (30p) rate is also non-denominated. It is inscribed "1<sup>st</sup>" and depicts Madonna and Child, a painting by Marianne Stokes. Stokes born in 1855 in Southern Austria, painted the Madonna and Child around 1907-08 in Ragusa, Italy.

The 42p stamp for the European basic rate up to 20 grams, shows The Virgin Mary With the Infant Christ, a European school color lithograph from circa 1900.

The 60p denomination for the European airmail rate up to 40 grams, pictures Choctow Virgin Mother and Child. John B Giuliani, a Catholic priest, painted this image of the Mother and Child as Choctaw Indians in 1995.

Illustrated on the 68p stamp for the airmail basic letter rate to the rest of the world up to 20 grams is a Mughal painting from India dated from circa 1620 to 1630. This painting, Madonna and Infant Jesus, belongs to the collection of the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (formerly the Prince of Wales Museum) in Mumbai.

The £1.12 value of the set for the airmail rate up to 40 grams for the rest of the world reproduces Come Let Us Adore Him, a painting in colored sand by Dianne Tchumut and from the Merrepen Arts Aboriginal Corporation of Northern Australia.

Royal Mail has been issuing Christmas stamps annually since 1966, but it has been six years since Royal Mail issued a set of Christmas stamps with a religious theme. Royal Mail announced that it plans to issue nonreligious and religious Christmas stamps in alternate years.

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FORTHCOMING STAMP ISSUES

- Nov 14: Children's Day, Rs 5
- Nov 14: Children's Film Society, Rs 5
- Nov 16: Punjab, Haryana & Delhi Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Rs 5
- Nov 17: World Summit on the Information Society, Rs 5
- Nov 19: Kolkata Police Commissionerate, Rs 5
- Nov 22: Jawaharlal Darda, Rs 5

These issues along with the First Day Cover and the information sheet, at Rs 2 each, shall be available on sale at nearly 1000 selected Post Offices including all Philatelic Bureaus and Counters in the country.

For an illustrated list of stamps in 2005, please visit
<http://www.stampsofindia.com/lists/2005stamps.htm>

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NEW MEGHDOOT POSTCARDS

Following Meghdoot post cards with advertisement were recently released:

- Primary Health Centres - Immunization Program, in Hindi
- National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) – Healthy Family ---, in Hindi
- NRHM – Timely Immunization, in Hindi
- NRHM – Keep Mosquitoes & Malaria away, in Hindi & English
- NRHM – Breastfeed baby for 6 months, in Hindi
- NRHM – Save the Girl Child, in Hindi & English
- NRHM – Always Consume Iodized Salt, in Hindi & English
- NRHM – Cataract Extraction with intraocular lens (IOL), in Hindi
- NRHM – The Best way to prevent the spread of TB, in English
- NRHM – HIV AIDS Prevention is better than cure, in Hindi & English

The complete illustrated list of Meghdoot Post Card is available at:  
<http://www.stampsofindia.com/stamps/meghdoot.htm>

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NEW STAMP BOOKLETS

- Sep 17: Mount Khangchendzonga, Rs 70, Gangtok
- Sep 21: 150 Years of India Post, Rs 50, Siliguri
- Oct 2: Mahatma Gandhi 1, Rs 60, Ahmadabad
- Oct 2: Mahatma Gandhi 2, Rs 60, Ahmadabad
- Oct 2: Mahatma Gandhi 3, Rs 60, Ahmadabad
- Oct 2: Mahatma Gandhi 4, Rs 60, Ahmadabad
- Oct 30: Letter Boxes, Rs 50, Kurseong
- Oct 31: Sardar Patel, Rs 75, Ahmadabad

For an illustrated list of Stamp Booklets, please visit <http://www.stampsofindia.com/lists/2005sb.htm>

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RECENT SPECIAL POSTMARKS & COVERS

- Nov 4: Thiruvananthapuram, Central Railway Station Platinum Jubilee
- Nov 14-27: New Delhi, 25<sup>th</sup> India International Trade Fair

For an illustrated list of special postmarks and covers in 2005, please visit  
<http://www.stampsofindia.com/stamps/2005pm.htm>

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RECENT & FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Oct 28-30: Kurseong, 3 covers

VAJRA PHILEX

Lieutenant General Mandhata Singh, General Officer Commanding 11 'Vajra' Corps, inaugurated the exhibition on November 7, 2005. The exhibition was well organized by the Army Postal Service at Jalandhar Cantonment. Exhibits from army personnel and members of Amritsar Philatelic Club, Ludhiana Philatelic Club and Jalandhar Philatelic Club were on display. Each and every participant was honored with memento and gift along with a certificate of participation. A lot of children from army schools visited this show. No cover was released during this exhibition.

Nov 12-23: Jeypore, KORPEX Koraput District level

Nov 13-14: Ludhiana, LUPEX

Venue: Lions Bhawan, Udhm Singh Nagar

Contact: Dr S K Sondhi sksondhi1@sify.com 0 9815657647

Nov 16-17: Irinjalakuda, IPEX District level
Venue: Municipal Town Hall, Irinjalakuda (Trichur District)

Nov 17-19: New Delhi, Delhi East District level
Venue: Arwachin Bharti Bhavan Senior Secondary School, Vivek Vihar
Contact: Pulak Gupta 098680 92984

Nov 26-27: Muzaffarpur, district level
Contact: Shyam Surekha 0 98354 69903
Leprosy Lichi

Dec 6-8: Jamshedpur, district level REVISED DATES
Venue: Tulsi Bhawan, Bistupur
Contact: Ashok Tiwary 0 93346 17581

Dec: Jammu, Army Postal Service

Dec: Puri, district level

Dec 15-16: Kolkata, Dealers Bourse
Venue: Swarbhumi The Hermitage Plaza
Contact: Kalyan Negal knegal@vsnl.net, Arun Bhattacharya 0 98304 12286

Dec 17-19: Kolkata, State Level, NEW DATES
Venue: Rangmunch, Swarbhumi The Hermitage Plaza
Contact: Madhukar Deogawanka, 0 98311 51219

2006

Jan 14-15: Chandigarh, district level

Jan: Sambalpur, district level

Jan: Kolkata, Army Postal Service

Feb: Hyderabad, Army Postal Service

Mar: Kamptee, Army Postal Service

For a list of exhibitions in 2005, please visit
<http://www.stampsfindia.com/infobase/events.htm>

MEETINGS

The schedule of meetings of the philatelic organizations in India is available at
<http://www.stampsfindia.com/infobase/clubmeet.htm>

BHUTAN NEW ISSUES

Sep 21: World Peace, Set of 6 se-tenant Stamps in Sheetlet, 10 NU each,
2005: Bridges of Bhutan, Set of 6 se-tenant Stamps in Sheetlet, 10 NU x3 and 20 NU x 3,

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VIEWS & OPINIONS

READERS FORUM

<Dear Reader, Your feedback is important to us as it helps evolve the newsletter. Please send us have your thoughts and suggestions.>

RAVI R VORA, Houston, Texas, USA

Fellow Indian Philatelists!

Dear Friends:

Ref: Matthew Bennett – HA Harmers Auctions, Switzerland, Nov 17, 2005:

Indian Postal History Collection

When I visited some of you in India earlier this year, I learned that many of you have a keen interest in participating in significant Indian philatelic auctions held overseas. However it has been difficult both to learn and receive such catalogs and also the general difficulty of bidding in foreign auctions especially those held outside of England... I had promised to work with those of you what wanted to avail themselves access to better material from time to time.

As a long term customer of Matthew Bennett International auctions (who are one of the leading and fastest growing public philatelic auction house in USA with subsidiaries in Switzerland and Hong Kong) I am pleased to present to you the enclosed catalog (or you may access it on their website: [www.bennettstamps.com](http://www.bennettstamps.com) due to short dead line) offering a superb "Life Time Collection of Indian Postal History" from one of the prominent collectors of India. As you will see the Lots 1261 to 1366, it has many unique items from Indian Postal History (Famous Waghorn to Block of 8 of 1854 1anna on cover to India PS used in Bamra to Germany) to Military Campaign (1836 Euphrates Survey Expedition Letter to First Second and Third Burmese War covers to a correspondence of 31 letters/covers from 1884-89 from Burma to India used in Boer War to Somali Field Forces, to Aden, Palestine, Turkey etc) to Rare India Used abroad (Aden, Burma, Dubai, French India, Portuguese India etc). This collection was built over 40+ years by a prominent collector and is a life time opportunity.

I encourage you to participate by bidding either directly (Contact Ms Gina at 410-453-9784) Matthew Bennett Fax: 410-453-9789. Email: [gdelorenzo@bennettstamps.com](mailto:gdelorenzo@bennettstamps.com) or through one of the agents listed in the catalog. Some of you have expressed reservations of directly dealing or bidding in foreign auctions for a variety of reasons and have requested my assistance. While I am not an auction agent, for this auction, I will make an exception and offer my assistance and/or services in bidding on behalf of some of you who need help. I am happy to cooperate provide you contact me immediately upon receipt of this letter to discuss your requirements and see how I may assist you. You can contact me directly at:

Ravi R. Vora

Phone: 001-713-683-9355;

FAX: 001-713-960-9204

Email: [ravi\\_vora@yahoo.com](mailto:ravi_vora@yahoo.com)

I regret that the catalogs or this announcement is reaching to you rather at the last minute. However, once you confirm you interest, we will ensure that you get future catalog or info about future sales of interest to you well in advance.

Wish you all the best of luck and I look forward to hearing from some of you. Happy belated Diwali and Sal Mubarak.

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FEATURES & RESOURCES

Indian Laws Relevant to Philately

<http://www.stampsofindia.com/infobase/laws.htm>

Report Cyber Crime & Internet Fraud related to Indian Philately

<http://www.stampsofindia.com/infobase/cybercrime.htm>

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ALSO IN THE NEWS

COLLECTORS EXCHANGE STAMPS WORTH MILLIONS

Bond investor Bill Gross of Newport Beach, California, USA anonymously purchased the block of four 24-cent 1918 air mail stamps known as the Inverted Jenny Block for \$2.97 million on October 19, 2005(see this column in Issue 244 of October 27, 2005).

He then traded them on November 2, 2005 for the single stamp missing from his 300-stamp collection: a small, blue 1-cent stamp bearing the image of Franklin, printed in 1868, known as "the Z Grill" because of the waffle-like grill pattern pressed into the back.

Gross now has the only complete collection of 19th-century US stamps.

Charles Shreve, the stamp dealer and auctioneer who arranged the exchange said "Not even the Smithsonian's National Postal Museum in Washington has one of everything."

NEWSSCAN  
<We invite you to contribute clippings on philatelic and postal matters, from other print and electronic publications, for inclusion here>

The Times of India, November 6, 2005  
Now, a stamp for every face!  
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/1285690.cms>

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ADMINISTRIVIA  
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STAMPS ON INDIA <http://www.stampsonindia.com>  
The site devoted to the stamps from all over the world on Indian topics

INDIAN POSTAL GUIDE 1869  
The first issue of the official postal guide, reprinted by Stamps of India 2004, 236 pages, hardbound, enlarged from original octavo to A4 size, limited edition, Special price – Rs 2750 post paid worldwide.  
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