

SIMPLIFIED CLASSIFICATION OF INDIAN AVIATION COVERS

Relevant General Information:

Various Aviation events in Modern India (I.e after Indian Independence) have been commemorated with covers. These include events like First Flights, Airport Inaugurations and other aviation related observations. Philately has been at the forefront to celebrate these events.

Aim and Scope:

Even though varied kinds of covers were issued for varied events, Novice collectors often wrongly synonymously refer them all under a single umbrella. This exhibit aims to debunk this misclassification and be a simple guide for collectors to classify various kinds of Modern Indian aviation covers. Such covers also sometimes have some oddities in Design which are NOT rarities but rather a carelessness or oversight in design. These have also been marked. Official Aerogrammes issued by the Postal Department have been kept out of scope of this exhibit as that is a different subject all together.

Personal Research and Bibliography:

The collector cum exhibitor has researched about Modern Indian aviation covers by reading, studying philatelic material and referring websites on this subject.

Presentation and Treatment:

Aviation and General Information is in Black. **Information about the cancellation is in Blue.**

There are Oddities by the postal department or cover makers in this exhibit marked in Red. (NOT Rarities)

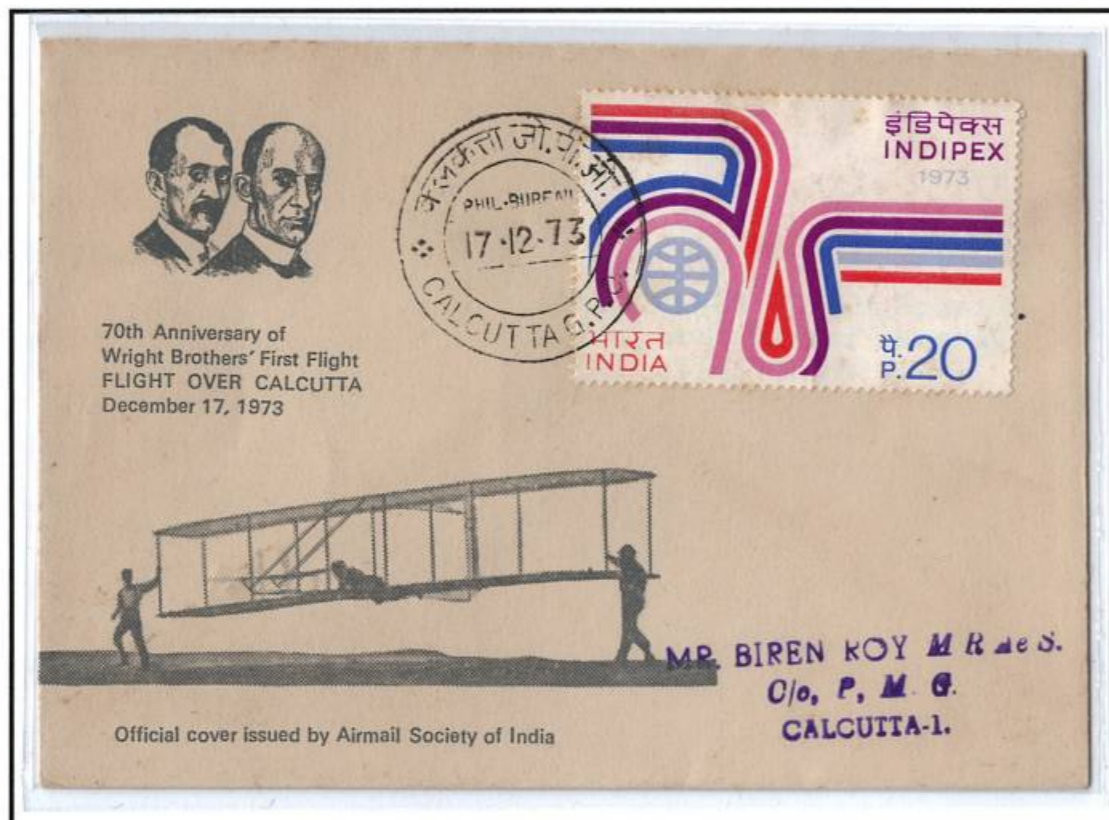
PLAN and my Simplified Classification of Modern Indian Aviation Covers for Beginners

- A) First Flight Covers Carried to India: Pg 2
- B) First Flight Covers Carried from India: Pg 3
- C) First Flight Covers Carried within India (Addressed): Pg 4
- D) First Flight Covers Carried within India (Unaddressed): Pg 5
- E) Non Carried Commemorative Flight Covers: Pg 6
- F) Airport Inauguration Covers: Pg 7
- G) Aeroshow, Anniversary, Last Flight Covers : Pg 8



↑

This cover commemorates the first Air-India flight on 8th June 1948 from Bombay to London. It was carried on a Lockheed Constellation L-749A aircraft. It was posted to Cairo where it was delivered on the return leg of the journey. This cover has multiple varieties including those posted to London. **But some covers posted for the return journey like this one did not have the origin cancellation at all.** It uses the 12 annas Stamp issued to commemorate the flight. **This variety shows a missed origin cancellation in India and only has the delivery cancellation of Cairo BOTH at the front and back.** It shows the special boxed cachet of the flight.



Cover issued by Airmail Society of India on 17 Dec 1973 to commemorate 70th Anniversary of Wright Brothers First Flight. Even though it is an Indian Aviation Cover issued by an Indian organisation it commemorates a foreign flight. **Postmarked at Calcutta on 17 Dec 1973.**



First Flight Cover of Air India Sharjah-Bombay Flight - 10th March 1981. Cover posted to Mr.Raghu Raj who was the then Chairman of Air India. Shows the Boxed cachet of the flight.

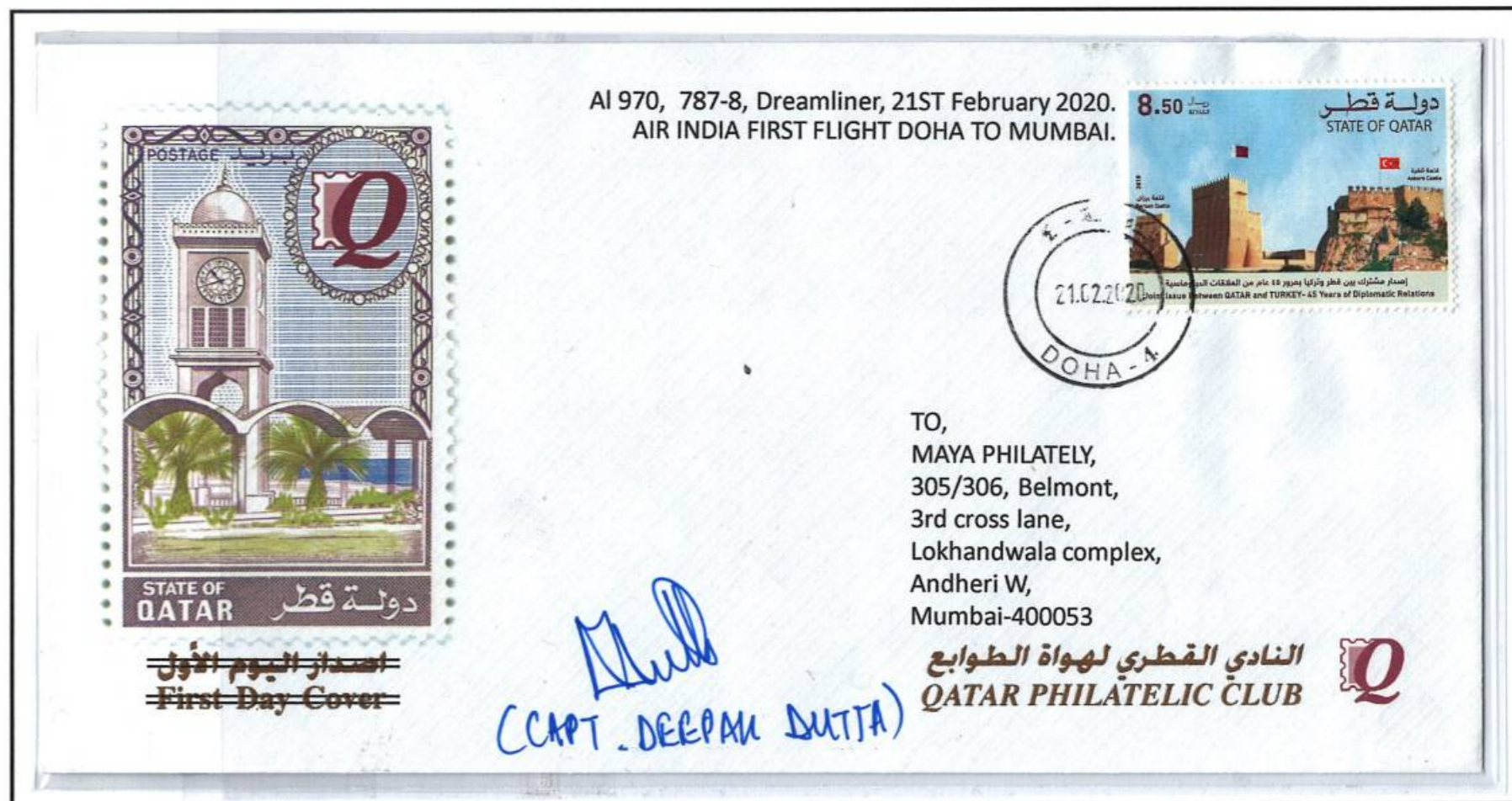


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First Flight Cover of Indian Airlines Flight from Dacca to Calcutta on 15th January 1972. Aircraft No VT-EAL - Boeing 737. Piloted by Capt SK Sen and Capt B Bhattacharya . Shows 15th January 1972 Dacca Cancellation.

First Flight Cover of Air India Flight AI-970 on a Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner from Doha to Mumbai. Signed by Flight Commander Capt. Deepak Dutta . Has 21st February 2020 Doha Cancellation.



First Flight Cover of Lufthansa Flight LH-691 from Singapore to Calcutta. Shows the Boxed cachet of the flight. Has 1st November Singapore Airport cancellation



AI 970, 787-8, Dreamliner, 21ST February 2020. AIR INDIA FIRST FLIGHT DOHA TO MUMBAI.

TO,
MAYA PHILATELY,
305/306, Belmont,
3rd cross lane,
Lokhandwala complex,
Andheri W,
Mumbai-400053

النادي القطري لهواة الطوابع
QATAR PHILATELIC CLUB

(CAPT. DEEPAK DUTTA)



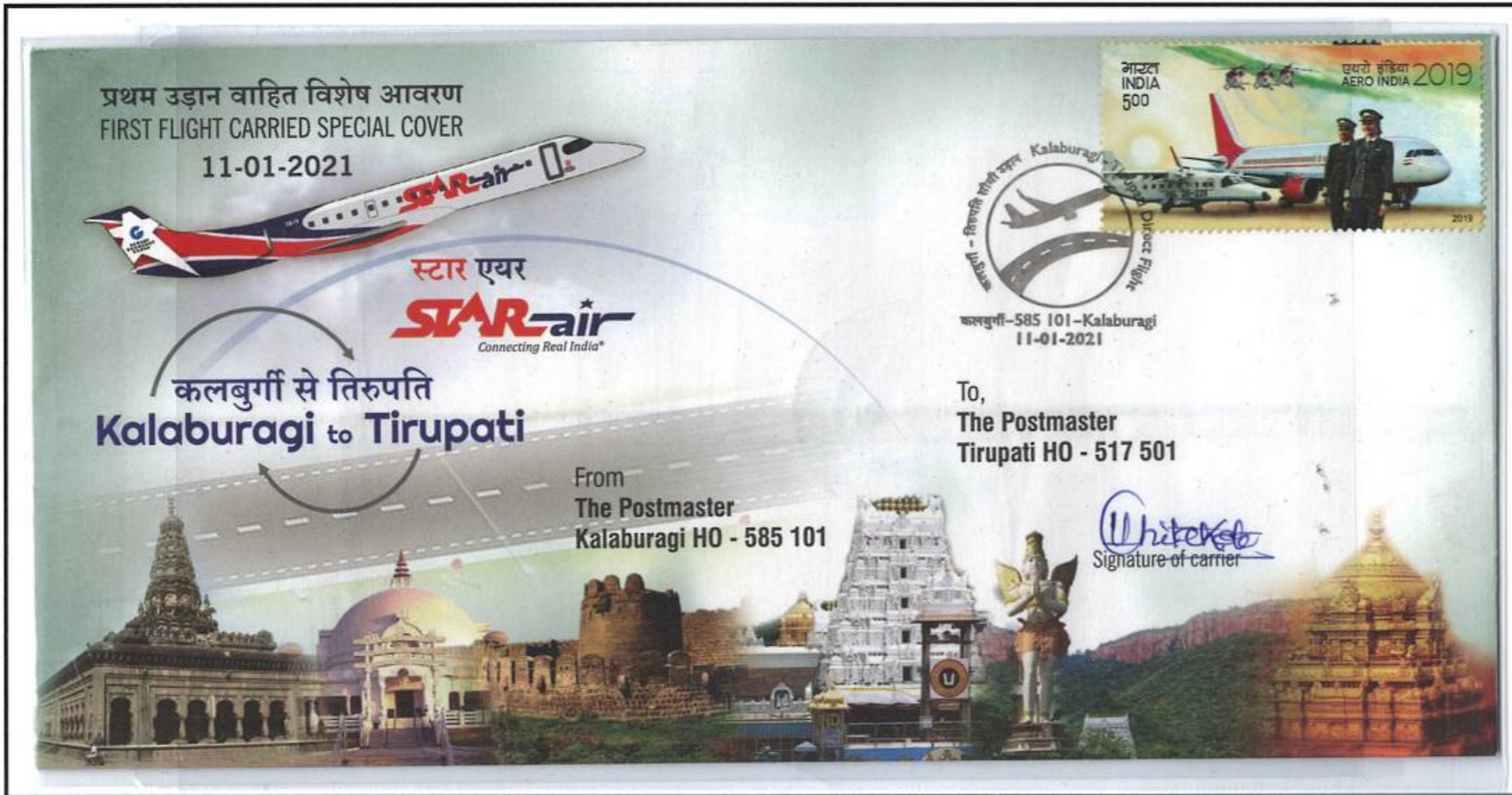
First Flight Cover of Air India Flight from Bombay to New York on May 26th 1971. Posted to Air India's New York office. Has 26th May 1971 Bombay Cancellation as well as Flight Cachet.



First Flight Cover of British Airways Inaugural Flight BA-889 from Calcutta to London on Boeing 747 - 7th April 1977. Posted to British Airways' office in London. Has 7th April 1977 Calcutta Cancellation. The cancellation reads Sydney-Hong Kong-Calcutta-Muscat-London as that was long route taken by this flight.



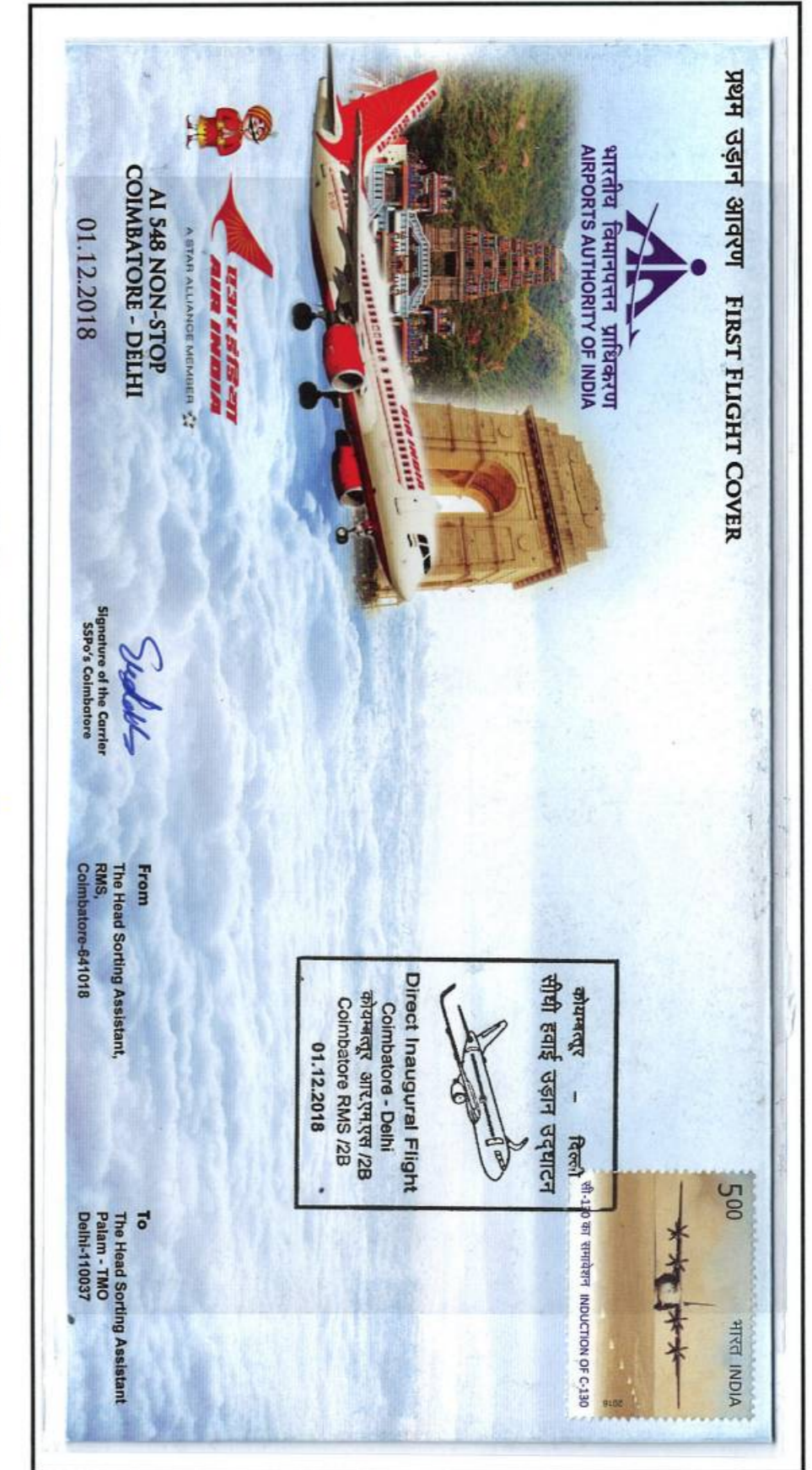
First Flight Cover of Air India Flight from Bombay to Bahrein on 4th Oct 1960. Cover posted to Air India's Bahrein office. Shows flight cachet and Bombay Cancellation on 4th Oct 1960.



↑ First Flight Cover of Star Air Flight from Kalaburgi to Tirupati on 11th January 2021. Posted from Postmaster, Kalaburgi to Postmaster, Tirupati. Has Sign of the Carrier. Has the Special Flight cancellation at Kalaburgi on 11th January 2021.



← First Flight Cover of Star Air Belagavi to Nashik Flight on 25th Jan 2021. Has Signature of Carrier. Posted by Belgavi Postmaster to Nashik Postmaster. Has Sign of Carrier. Surprisingly the cover is distributed and made by the Postal Department. Cover No. is KTK/10/2021 as per Special Cover records of the department yet it uses No Stamp or any Postal Payment and no mention that it is on use by the postal service. Yet it has a Delivery Cancellation on the Reverse !!



→ First Flight Cover of Coimbatore to Delhi Inaugural Flight AI-548 - 1st Dec 2018. Has the signature of the Carrier. Has the Boxed flight cancellation of 1st Dec 2018.



← Special Cine Flight Cover. On 22nd July 2016 AirAsia offered a special flight from Bengaluru to Chennai for fans to watch the first show of Superstar Rajanikanth's movie Kabali. Covers were carried on the flight and then distributed to fans and philatelists. Has Special Cancellation at Bangalore dt 22nd July 2016 released for this occasion.



First Flight Cover of Indian Airlines Inaugural Flight from Calcutta to Bombay on 1st December 1976. Has the Special Cancellation at Calcutta made for this occasion.



FDC to Commemorate Indian Airlines' Inaugural flight of its first Airbus aircraft on 1st December 1976. This aircraft flew on multiple routes. In normal practice FDCs are not flown hence are not flight covers but It is claimed by available information that the covers which were cancelled at Santa Cruz airport were indeed flown on the aircraft and distributed to philatelists in Bombay but no such indication is provided on the cover. Has the first day cancellation at Bombay Santacruz Airport.



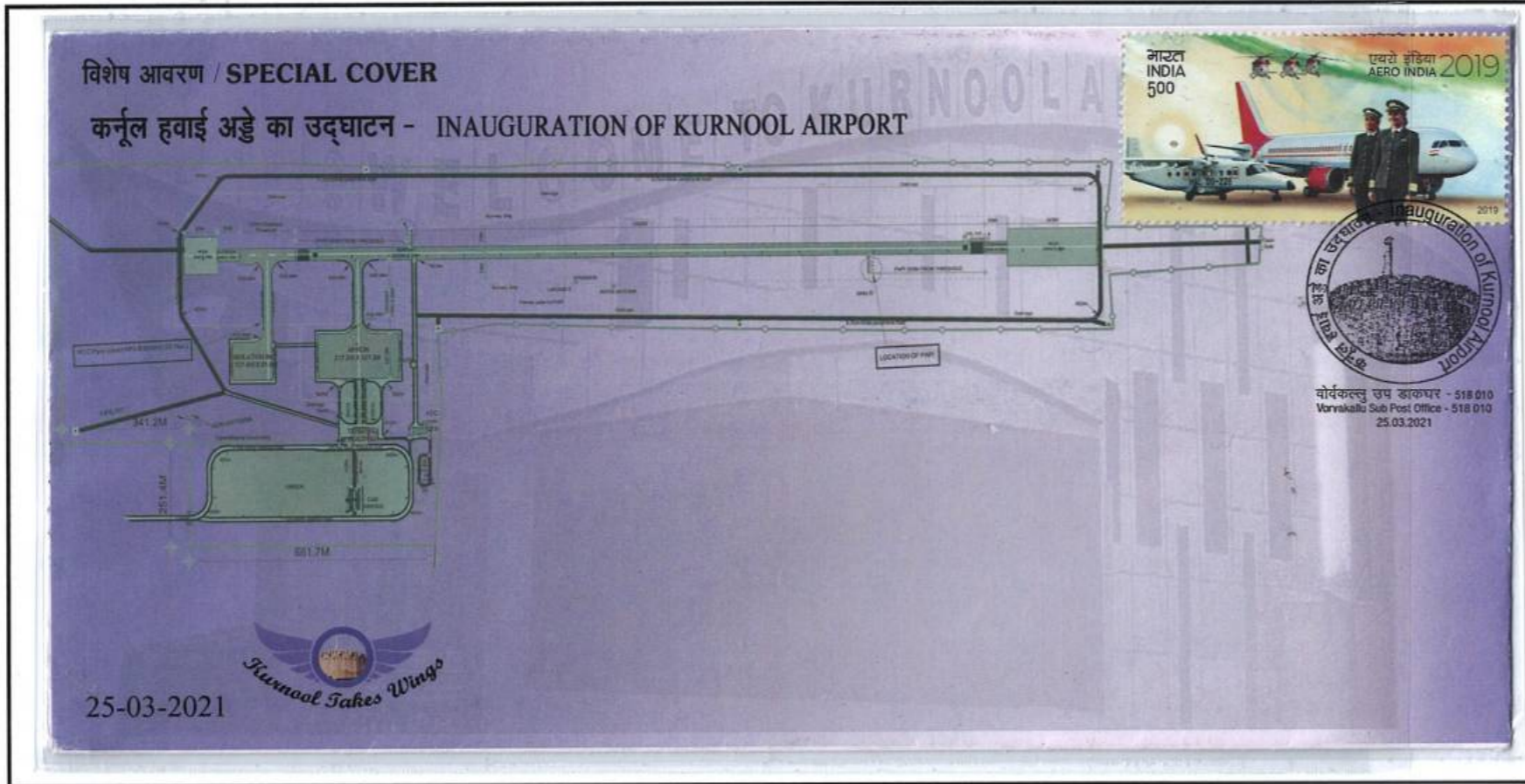
← Special Cover to commemorate Air India Flight AI 903 from Indore to Dubai on 15th July 2019. It was the First International Flight from Indore. Cover released by Post Master General Indore. Has Special Cancellation at Indore dt 15th July 2019 released for this occasion.

Souvenir Cover to commemorate the First Landing of the Airbus A 300 at Delhi Airport in November 1973. It was not a regular commercial flight. But a promotional flight by Airbus operating a Air France aircraft to promote Airbus to the Indian Government. It is posted to Air France's Delhi office. If you notice the Cover design it says 02/05 November. The reason for the odd way of writing the date in this manner is because the Aircraft first landed on 2nd November, then proceeded to South East Asia on 3rd November and then landed again on 5th November. It has a 3rd November 1973 cancellation at Delhi.

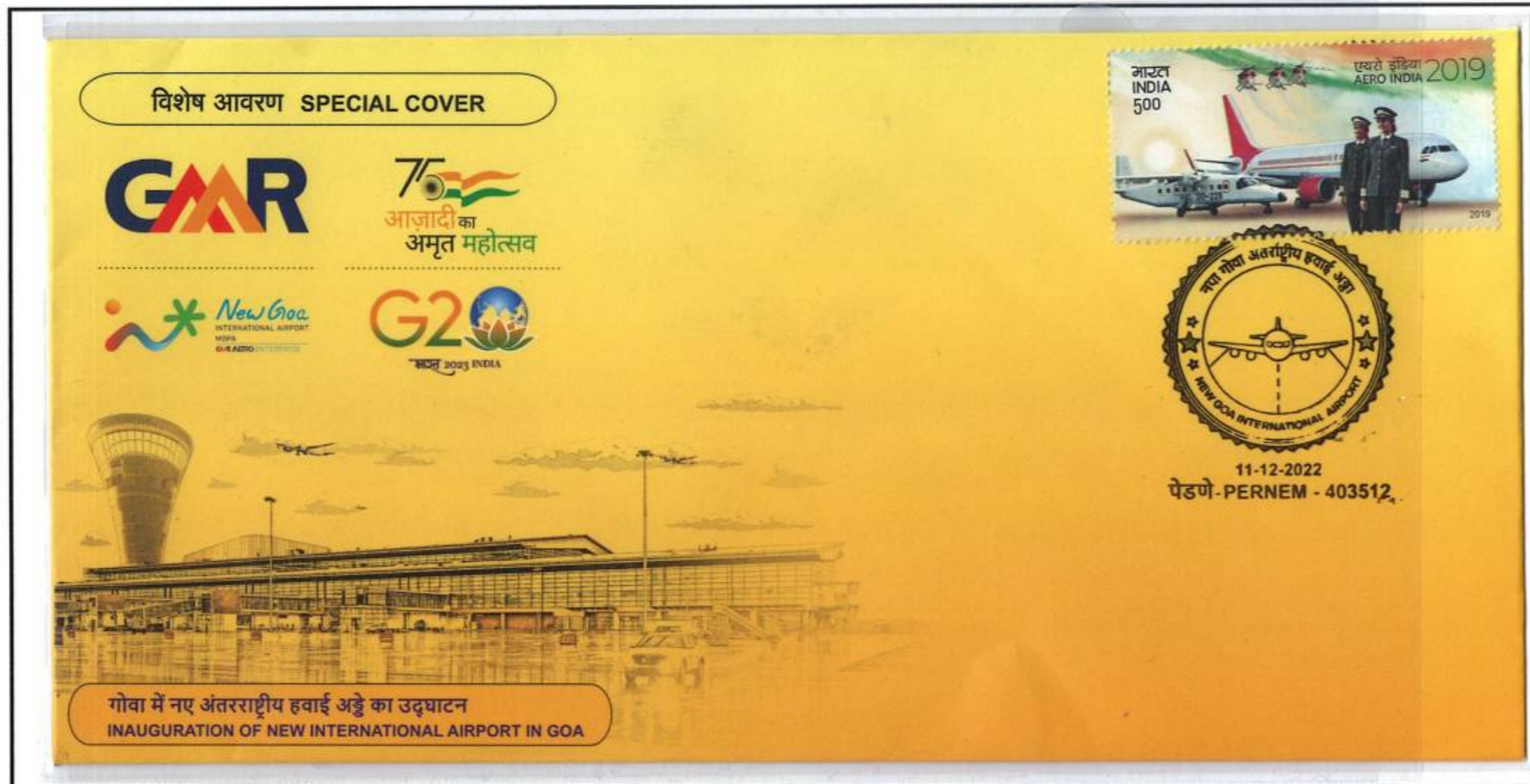


↑ On 22nd February 2022, Air India operated 3 special flights from Ukraine (Keiv) to Delhi amidst the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine War. This is a Self designed cover to commemorate these flights. Has Special Cancellation at Rashtrapati Bhavan, Delhi with a Palindrome Date 22/2/22.

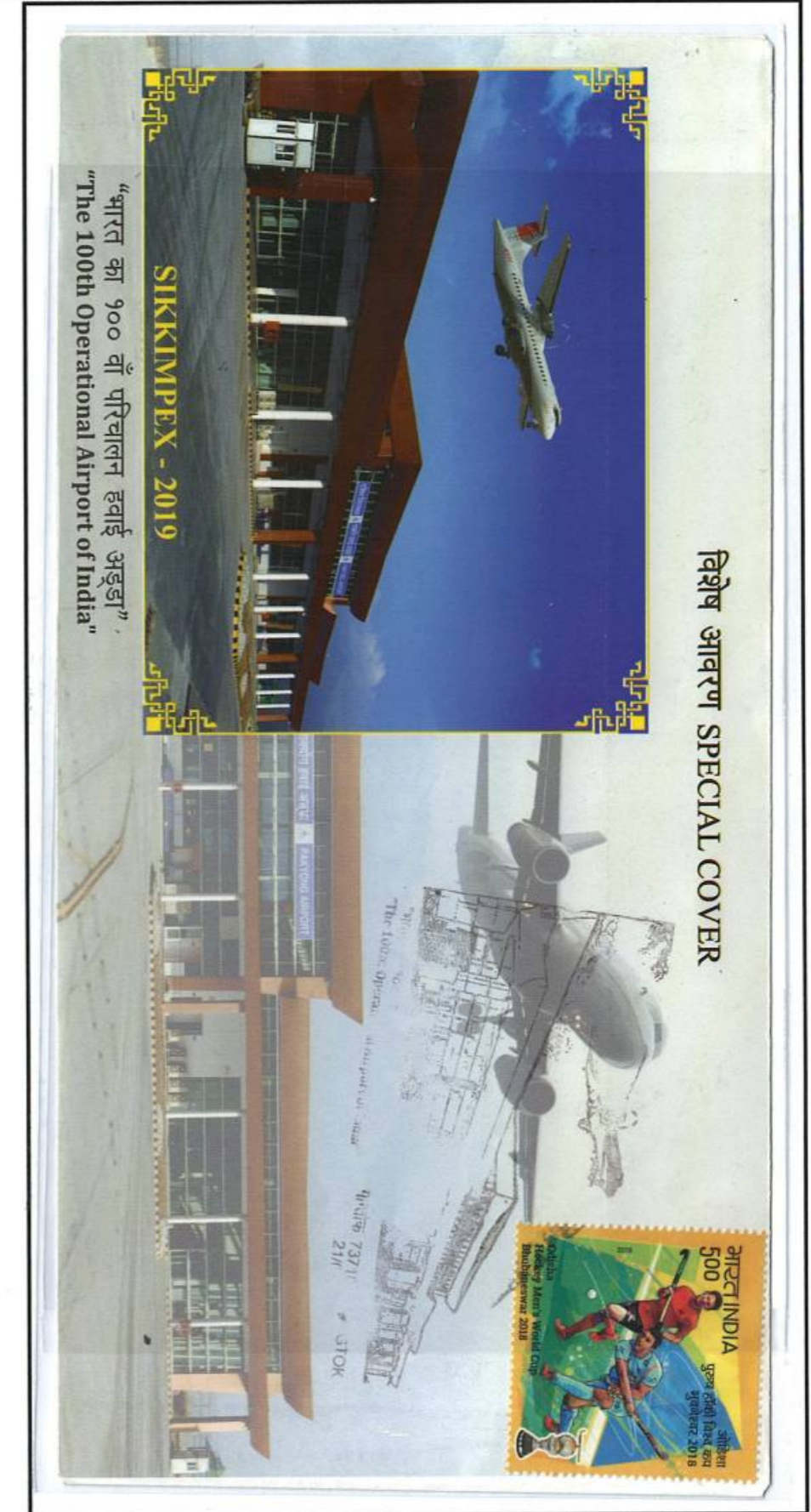




Commemorative Cover of Kurnool Airport inaugurated on 25th March 2021. Airport IATA Call Sign is KJB. Has the Special Cancellation at Kurnool dated 25th March 2021 released for this occasion.



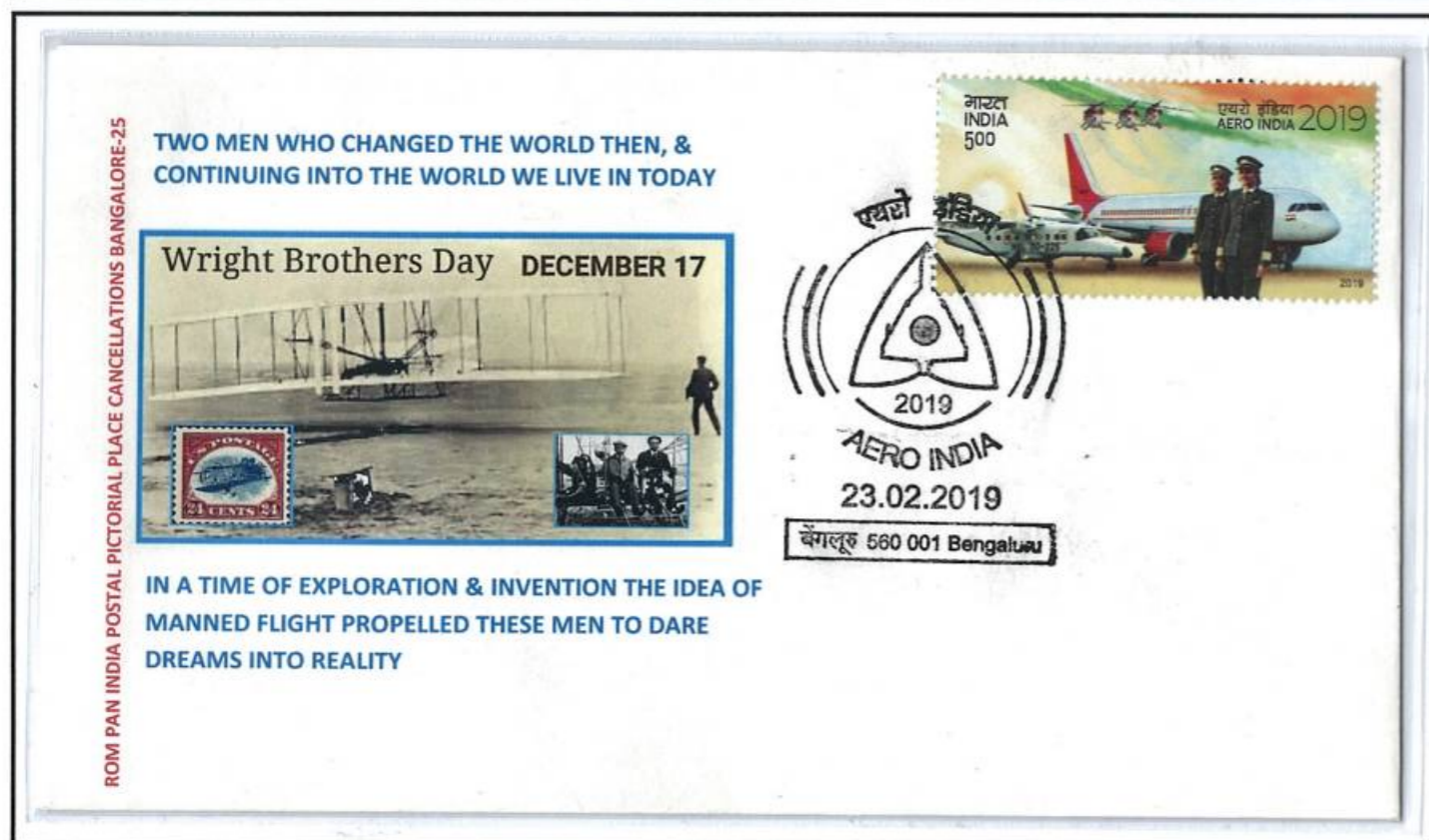
Commemorative Cover of New Goa International Airport inaugurated on 11 December 2022. Airport IATA Call Sign is GOX. Has the Special Cancellation at Pernem, Goa dated 11 December 2022 released for this occasion.



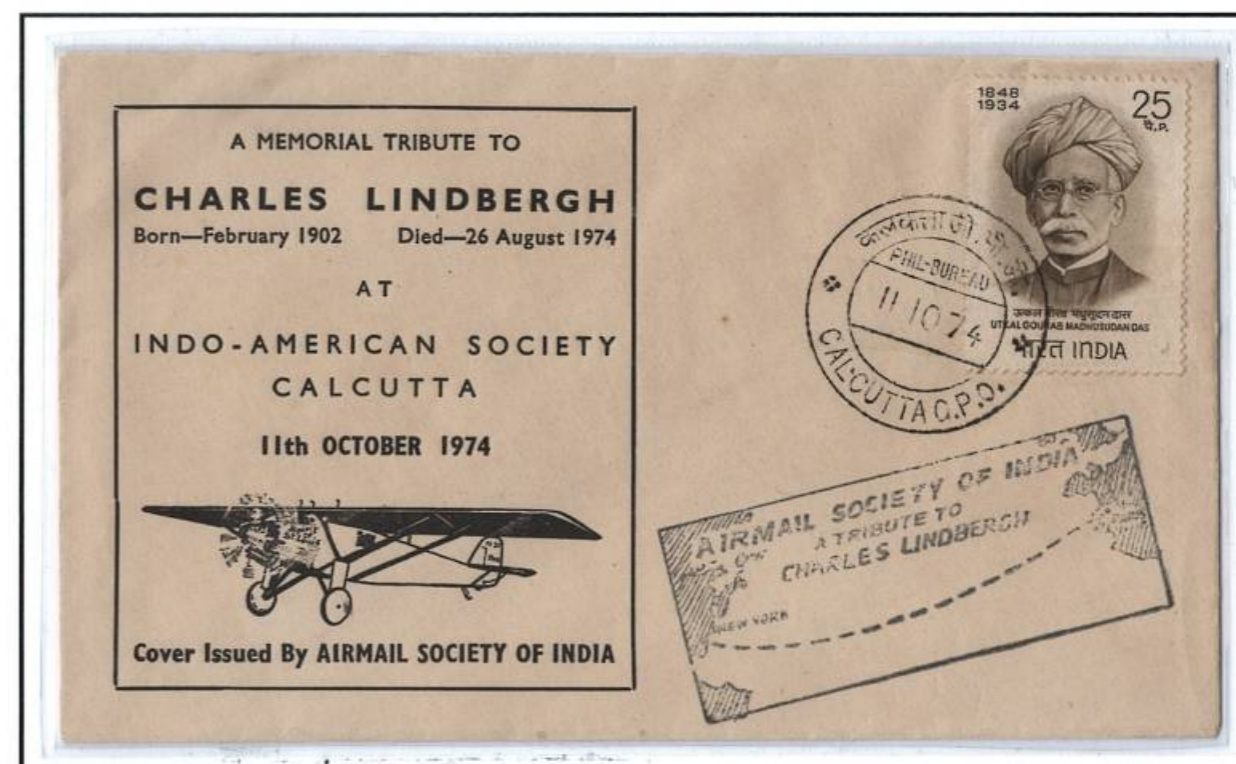
Commemorative Cover of Pakyong Airport, Gangtok which is India's 100th airport. Cover released during Sikkimpex 2019 exhibition. Airport IATA Call Sign is PYG. Has the Special Cancellation at Gangtok released for this occasion. Airport was inaugurated in September 2018. Inauguration Cover was released in February 2019. In June 2019 the Airport stopped scheduled operation itself as its only operator suspended flights.



Last Flight Cover of Air Vistara Flight UK 504 from Kochi to Bengaluru - 11th November 2024. After this flight Air Vistara ceased operations as it amalgamated into Air India. Cover produced by Air Mail Society India Foundation. Carrier sign on reverse. Stamp on Left is tied to Kochi permanent pictorial cancellation dated 11th Nov 2024. Stamp on Top right is tied to Bangalore Vidhana Soudha permanent pictorial cancellation dated 12th Nov 2024.



Cover produced by Pan India Postal Pictorial Cancellations Group during the Aero India Show 2019 in Bangalore to remember Wright Brothers's first flight. The Wright Brothers flight anniversary was on December 17th but the Cover was postmarked to order on 23rd February during the Aeroshow as a special cancellation of the Aero show was released for philatelists. Cover has 23rd February 2019 Aeroshow special cancellation.



Cover to commemorate the Anniversary of Charles Lindbergh's 11th October 1927 Flight from New York to Paris for the Orteig Prize. Cover produced by Airmail Society of India to commemorate an anniversary function in this regard at Indo-American Society, Calcutta on 11th October 1974. Has 11th October 1974 cancellation at Calcutta with boxed cachet of the anniversary event.