

TAJ MAHAL: A PHILATELIC JOURNEY THROUGH ETERNAL BEAUTY

Who could ever think that an eternal love leading to the saga of infinite bondage can evolve out of a desert like land and would blossom to be the reason to gift our world a poem-in-marble, The Taj

INTRODUCTION

No image of The Taj, neither on canvass nor on celluloid, can adequately express its conceptual imaginary nor convey the legend, the poetry and the romance that shrouds what Rabindranath Tagore calls “*a teardrop on the cheek of time*”.

The Taj Mahal, a spectacle in white marble, unparalleled in grandeur that depicts the sheer opulence of an era. The awesome structure, the monument of love that Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan gave to the world, stands as a testimony of his intense love for his wife Mumtaz Mahal.

It is a romance celebrated in marble and glorified with precious and semi-precious stones and that’s the way to appreciate it!

Taj Mahal means “Crown Palace” and is in fact the most well preserved and architecturally beautiful tomb in the world. It is a romance celebrated in marble and glorified with precious and semi-precious stones and that’s the way to appreciate it!.

Taj Mahal stands on the bank of River Yamuna, which otherwise serves as a wide most defending the Great Red Fort of Agra, the center of the Mughal emperors until they moved their capital to Delhi in 1637.

As a tribute to a woman of exotic beauty and as a monument of a love story, which is keeping us engrossed even when we are reading through these pages here, truly an ever-lasting romance of a love not ended as yet, the Taj reveals its subtleties to its beholder!

TREATMENT

This exhibit includes philatelic material issued by India Post and selected International administrations, along with First Day Covers, cancellations, postal history and relevant varieties.

The exhibit emphasises material that supports both thematic coherence and philatelic depth.

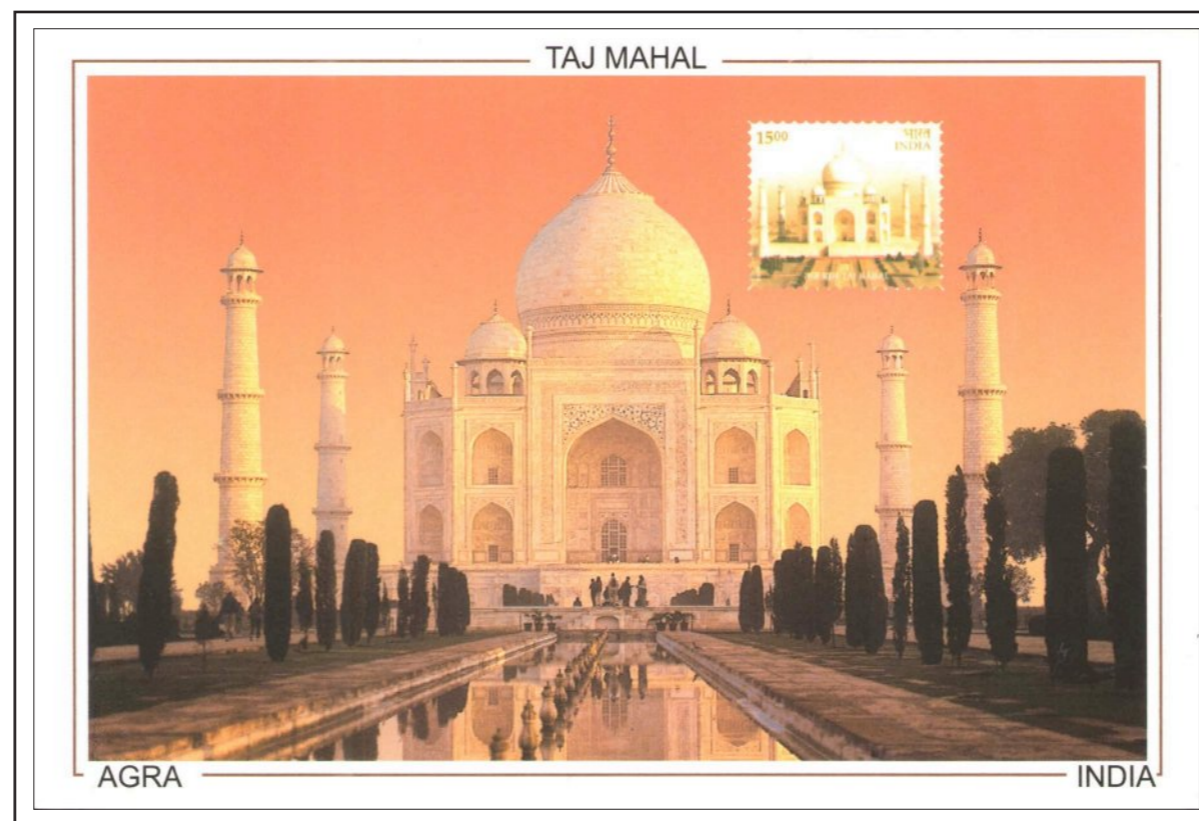
Modern mass-produced philatelic items are used sparingly unless they add thematic or comparative value.

Much of the detailed information pertaining to the Taj Mahal is from the public domain and published literature. Rare philatelic items are identified with Red Matt and the rarity is explained.

CHOICE OF MATERIALS

Covers/Entires/Hand Seals have been chosen to reflect the best possible examples to illustrate the story. Efforts have been put in to use only clear copy of covers. However, in some cases not so good covers are illustrated because the clear copies and better examples are hard to obtain and practically unavailable.

At times non-philatelic and self designed covers are used in this exhibit. This is done to complete the story.



AIM & SCOPE OF THE EXHIBIT

This exhibit depicts various aspects on Taj Mahal benefiting from a structured narrative that blends history, architecture, symbolism, and postal material. Plan of the Exhibit provides the chapter-wise outline. This exhibit aims to present a structured study of the Taj Mahal, tracing its historical origin, architectural evolution and artistic significance and to demonstrate how this iconic monument has been interpreted and document through philatelic material from India and around the world.

A detailed study includes the cultural, touristic and symbolic significance of the Taj as reflected in philately. The planning and construction of the monument, the architectural and artistic features including layout,

symmetry, calligraphy and *Pietra Dura* work is studied in this exhibit.

This exhibit is not a full architectural or historical treatise, but focuses on aspects that can be supported philatelically and conservation efforts by Archaeological Survey of India.

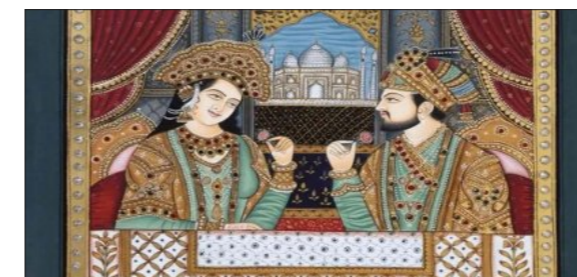
This exhibit is a philatelic interpretation of the Taj Mahal as a symbol of architectural perfection and enduring legacy.



Taj Mahal is located in Agra, Uttar Pradesh, India, coordinates: 27°10'30"N 78°02'31"E

PLAN OF THE EXHIBIT

Sl	Name	Frame No.	Page No(s)
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Mumtaz Mahal & Shah Jahan

इक शहशाह ने बनवा के हसीं ताज-महल सारी दुनिया को मोहबबत की नशानी दी है

इस के साए में सदा प्यार के चर्चे होंगे खत्म जो हो न सकेगी वो कहानी दी है

Taj Mahal, built by an emperor is a sign of love to the whole world. Forever in its shadow, love will be discussed and that story will never end.

Lyrics from the Hindi song of the movie Leader (1964). To listen to the entire song and to see how Taj looks like, scan the QR code



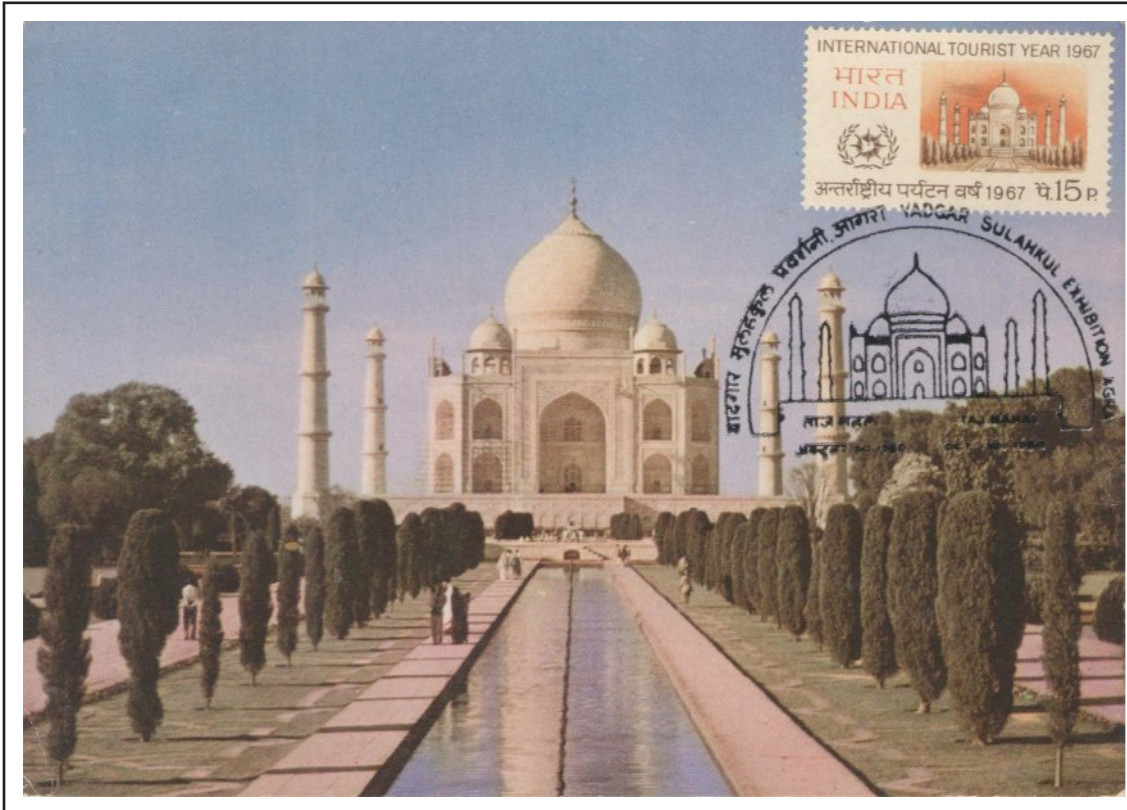
Scan this QR Code to see how beautifully Taj Mahal is choreographed in a Bollywood song sequence.

REFERENCES

- <https://www.tajmahal.gov.in/taj-story.aspx>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taj_Mahal
- <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/252/>
- <https://agra.nic.in/tourist-place/the-taj-mahal/>
- <https://www.incredibleindia.gov.in/en/uttar-pradesh/agra/taj-mahal>

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Taj Mahal is an ivory-white marble mausoleum on the right bank of the river Yamuna in Agra, Uttar Pradesh, India. It was commissioned in 1631 by the fifth Mughal emperor, Shah Jahan to house the tomb of his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal. It also houses the tomb of Shah Jahan himself. The tomb is the centre piece of a 17-hectare complex, which includes a mosque and a guest house, and is set in formal gardens bounded on three sides by a crenelated wall.



Post card issued by V.T. Product showing Taj Mahal, its garden along with the 15 p International Tourist Year 1957 stamp depicting Taj Mahal issued by India Post.

A white marble tomb built in 1631 - 48 in Agra, seat of the Mughal Empire, by Shah Jahan for his wife, Arjuman Banu Begum aka Mumtaz Mahal, the monument sums up many of the formal themes that have played through Islamic architecture. Its refined elegance is a conspicuous contrast both to the Hindu architecture of pre-Islamic India, with its thick walls, corbeled arches and heavy lintels, and to the Indo-Islamic styles, in which Hindu elements are combined with an eclectic assortment of motifs from Persian and Turkish sources.

The crowning glory of the city is obviously The Taj, a monument of an imagination turned into a "symbol of eternal love". The Taj represents India to the world embellished by Shah Jahan with marble mosques, palaces and pavilions of gem-inlaid white marble.



Post card of unknown origin and publisher showing Empress Mumtaz Mahal and Emperor Shah Jahan.

14 year-old Prince Khurram (Shah Jahan) was once taking a sweet walk by the lanes of Mena Bazaar in the year 1607. He then saw a beautiful girl who was selling and assembling some silk items and even some glass beads. The beauty of the girl enchanted him and he started to stalk the girl a bit.

After five years from the hour when he announced his love for the girl, the two of these lovebirds solemnly been hitched in the year 1612.

He also awarded his wife 'Arjumand Bano Begum' with the lovely title of 'MUMTAZ MAHAL', which means 'the jewel of the palace'.

Then came the dark phase in the lives of the two lovebirds, when Begum Mumtaz Mahal was giving birth to her 14th child and the proof of the love between them she fell seriously ill and week and could not take the pressure of the bad health.



Post card of unknown origin showing Mumtaz Mahal and Shah Jahan

The heavy loss made the king fall deep in pain and grief; he was so upset and sad that his life became a living hell without his better half.

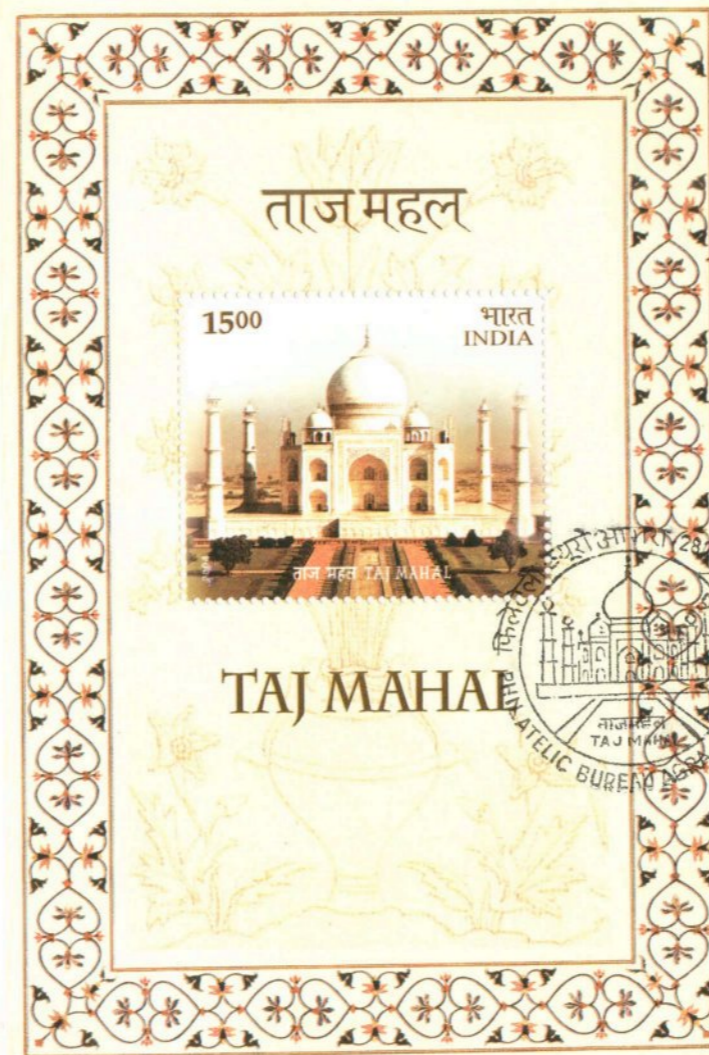
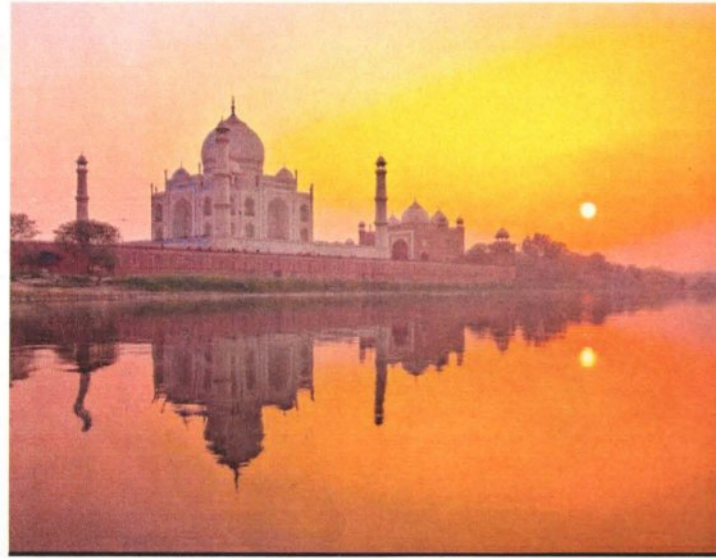
Later he thought of the promise he made to his dead wife, that when she dies he would make the tomb of her grave so big and amazing that the world would lose a breath looking at the magnificent beauty, **here is when he thought to start the work for his dream Taj Mahal.**

His love was so real that the promise of making the most beautiful and magnificent building for his beloved came true. Hence, it now stands tall and strong for us and also for the coming generations **as one of the Seven Wonders of the World.**

Emperor Shah Jahan and his beloved made the people of the world believe that the love is a pious and if you love someone then each man is Shah Jahan and every women is Mumtaz Mahal.

CONSTRUCTION & CRAFTSMANSHIP

The Taj Mahal is actually an integrated complex of structures with the white domed marble mausoleum being its most significant component. Entrusted to a board-of-architects by the Emperor Shah Jahan, the construction of the Taj Complex began about 1631 AD. The principal mausoleum was completed in 1648 AD by employing thousands of artisans and craftsmen, whereas, the outlying buildings and gardens were finished five years later in 1653 AD.



The chief architect of the Taj Mahal was Ustad Ahmad Lahori, a Persian architect in the court of Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan. He was responsible for designing the masterpiece, blending Persian, Islamic, and Indian architectural styles, and led a workforce of 20,000 artisans.

Some of the builders involved in construction of Taj Mahal under the master supervision of the Emperor Shah Jahan himself are:

- **Designer of the main dome** - Ismail Afandi (aka. Ismail Khan) of the Ottoman Empire.
- **Key role in the architectural design** - Ustad Isa and Isa Muhammad Effendi of Persia
- **Supervising Architect** - Puru from Benarus, Persia
- **Cast the solid Gold Finial** - Qazim Khan, a native of Lahore.
- **The Chief Sculptor and Mosaicist** - Chiranjilal, a lapidary from Delhi
- **The Chief Calligrapher** - Amanat Khan from Shiraz, Iran.



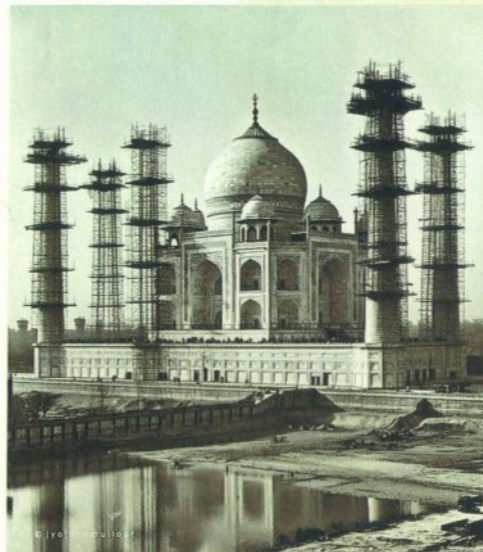
Miniature painting of Ustad Ahmad Mimar Lahori


Self Designed cover showing the view of **Taj Mahal Complex** from the Yamuna River side. Cover also shows the Miniature Sheet issued by India Post on 16 December 2004 to commemorate Taj Mahal.

Key Construction Timeline:

- 1631: Mumtaz Mahal passes away; plans for the mausoleum begin.
- 1632: Construction officially begins on the southern bank of the Yamuna River.
- 1632–1638: Foundation and the main plinth construction.
- 1638–1639: Completion of the main mausoleum (white marble tomb structure).
- 1643: Completion of the surrounding adjunct buildings, including the mosque and guest house.
- 1643–1653: Continued work on the gardens, boundary walls, and gateway, with finishing decorations and calligraphy.
- 1653: The entire complex, including the outer courtyard and cloisters, is finished.

WORLD HERITAGE DAY 18th April





POST OFFICE AGRA
18.4.23
AGRA-282001

Dear Ayo John Mulloor,

I am pleased to send you these images of the construction of the Taj Mahal which was built as a tribute to my beloved Mumtaz. I hope that these images will inspire and captivate you as they have inspired me.

The construction of the Taj Mahal was a labor of love that took several decades to complete. The mausoleum was essentially finished in 1648, with work continued on other phases of the project for another five years. The Mahal complex was finally completed in 1653 at a cost of approximately 20 million, which in 2020 would be approximately ₹70 billion (about the cost of a billion).

The project employed over 20,000 skilled artisans under the guidance of a board of architects led by Ustad Ahmad Lahauri, the chief architect. Qasim Isa Shirazi was also involved in the project, contributing his talent and expertise.

The Taj Mahal is a symbol of natural beauty and divinity, and the use of symbolism have been employed to reflect this, including intricate carvings, precious gemstones, and stunning calligraphy.

I am honored that you are interested in the Taj Mahal and the story behind its construction. Please feel free to share these images with the public so that others may appreciate the beauty and grandeur of this magnificent monument.

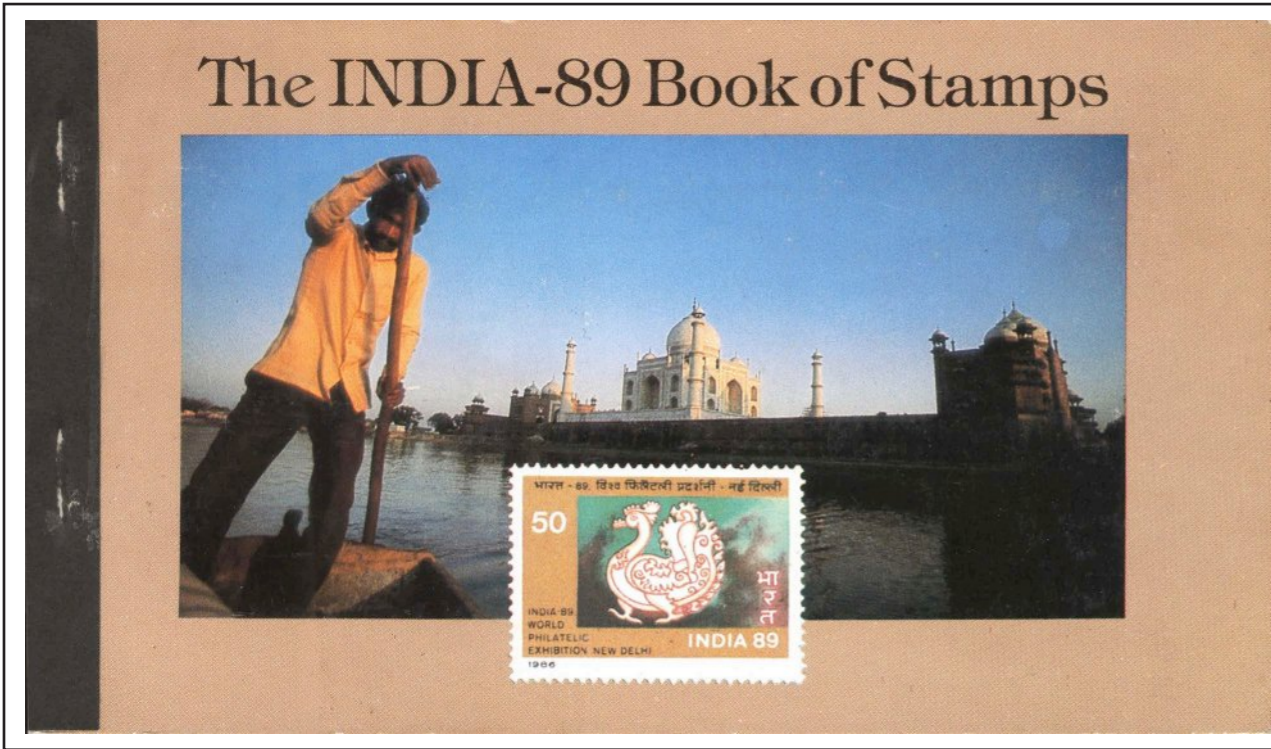
Yours sincerely,
Shah Jahan

These AI generated images of the construction of Taj Mahal
are too real to be missed
The special letter by Shah Jahan (generated by AI too)

Self Designed cover showing the AI generated image of the construction of Taj Mahal.

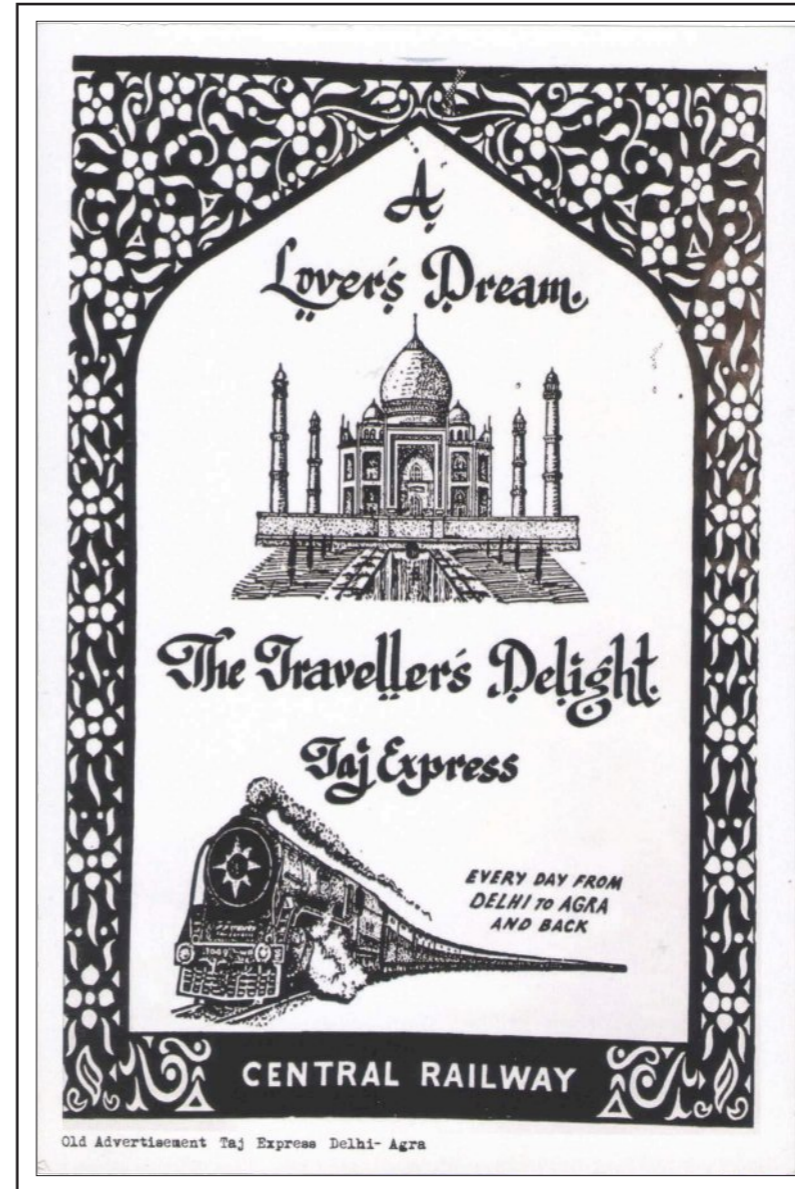
CONSTRUCTION & CRAFTSMANSHIP

The Indo-Islamic architecture had incorporated and reinterpreted many of the traditions, forms and symbolism of both the indigenous Hindu architecture with the predominant Islamic architecture ever since the era of the Delhi Sultantate. During the Mughal Empire, the extent varied according to the prevailing political climate; scant with Babur, extensively with Akbar, but they ruled a land dominated by non-muslims and most buildings were built with Hindu craftsmen and labour under the direction of Muslim artists and architects. The vegetative tracery, inlay work and most obviously the lotus dome and finial of the Taj Mahal are all testament to this synthesis.



Engineers created deep wells anchored into the Yamuna riverbed bedrock, filled with stone and iron to create a stable foundation in the soft soil.

Cover of the INDIA-89 book of stamps issued by India Post during the INDIA-89 World Philatelic Exhibition held at New Delhi in 1989. Cover showing the Taj Mahal and its Grand Entrance on the banks of Yamuna River.



Animation showing the construction of the Taj Mahal

Materials used for the construction of Taj Mahal came from various places from within India and outside India. They were transported by land, Yamuna river and other means.

- The white marble came from Makrana in Rajasthan.
- The red sandstone was quarried from Fatehpur Sikri in Uttar Pradesh.
- Many precious and semi-precious stones, used for decoration, were imported from across the world, jade and crystal from China, turquoise from Tibet, Lapis lazuli from Afghanistan, sapphire from Sri Lanka and carnelian from Arabia.

Old Advertisement converted to a post card, advertising "The Taj Express" the daily express train between Delhi and Agra.



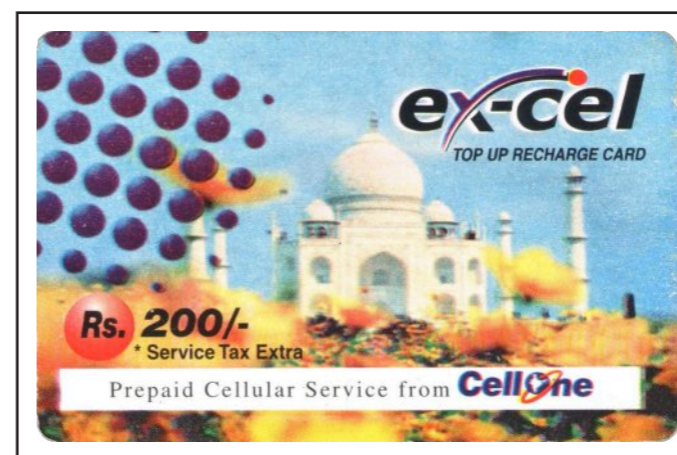
Old post card printed in Luxemburg (sic) showing Shahjahan and Mumtaz Mahal.

Shah Jahan's Key Roles in the Construction of Taj Mahal:

- **Visionary and Patron:** Heartbroken by his wife's death, Shah Jahan envisioned a monument of unparalleled beauty to represent their love, initiating construction in 1632.
- **Design Influence:** He emphasized strict symmetry, a defining feature of his architectural style, requiring the structure to be balanced and harmonic.
- **Resource Management:** Utilizing the vast wealth of the Mughal Empire, he sourced fine white marble from Makrana, Rajasthan, and employed roughly 20,000 artisans.
- **Supervision:** He oversaw the project, which included a "board of architects" rather than a single designer, with Ustad Ahmad Lahauri often cited as a key supervisor.
- **Symbolism:** He intended the complex, with its gardens and white marble, to be a replica of the "House of Mumtaz in Paradise"



Postage Stamp issued by Spain on 23 September 2016 commemorating Taj Mahal as one of the 7 New Wonder's of the World. Perforation: 13 Engraving: R.C.M.



Excel Phone card from CellOne showing a beautiful view of Taj Mahal

Shah Jahan was enamoured by the beauty of the land at the south side of Agra on which a mansion belonging to Raja Jai Singh I stood.

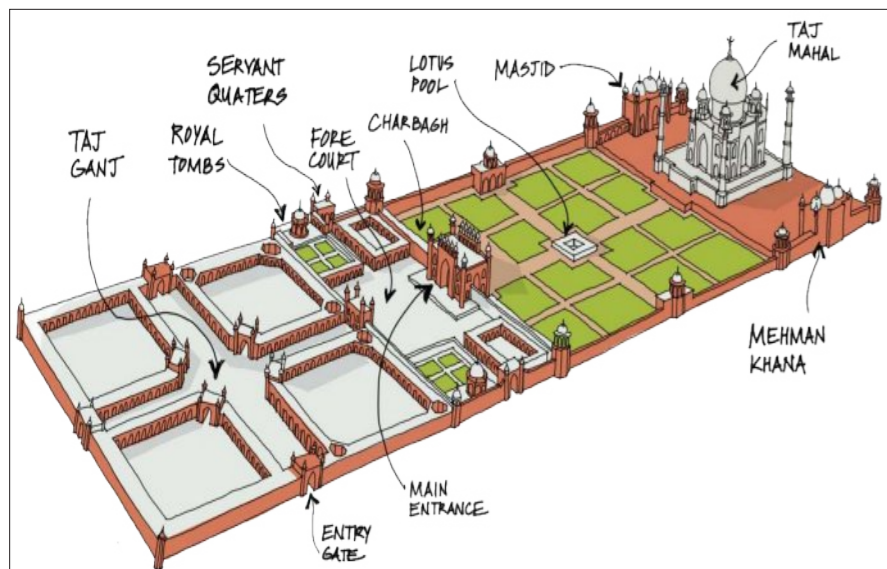
He chose the place for the construction of Mumtaz's tomb after which Jai Singh agreed to give it to emperor Shah Jahan in exchange for a large palace in the centre of Agra.

ARCHITECTURAL MARVEL

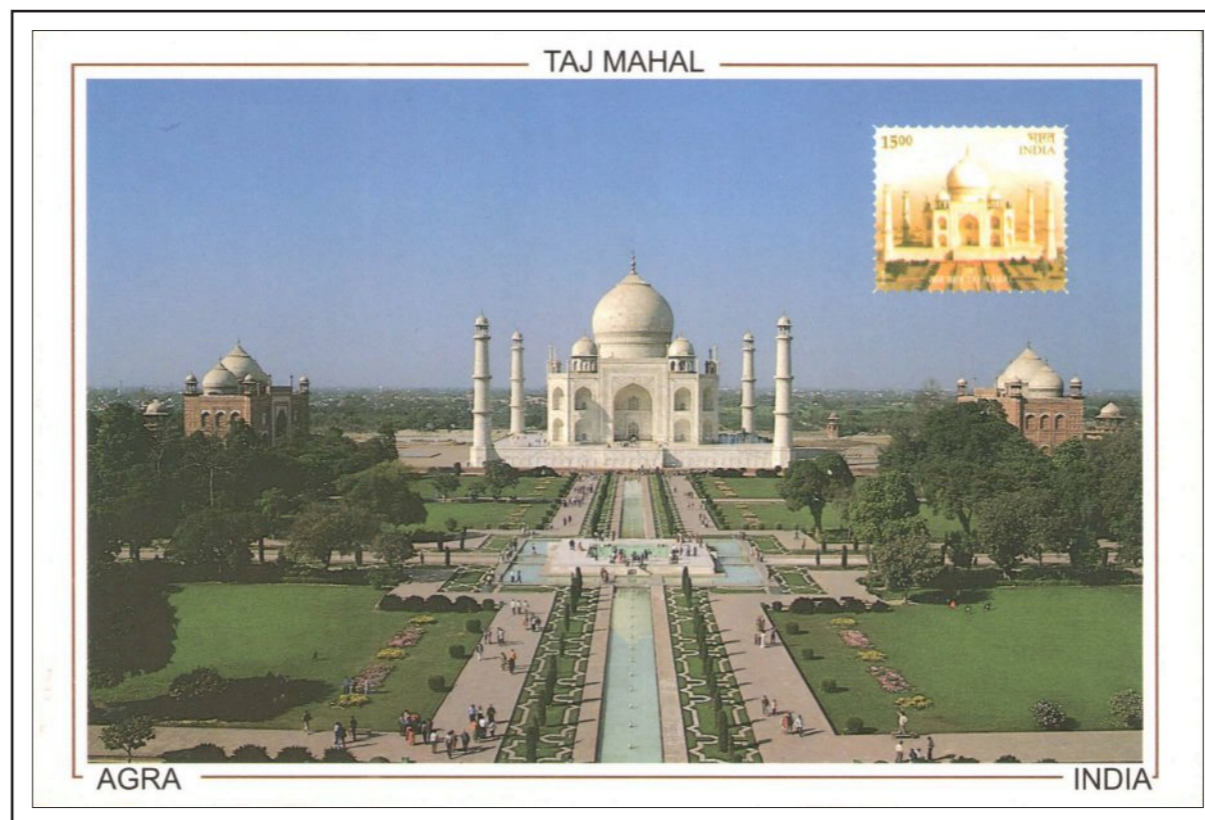
Taj Mahal is an ambassador of Shah Jahan's strong interest in building and artistic innovations. The new architectural style includes aspects that were to impinge much of subsequent Indian architecture. Symmetry along two sides of a central axis, new columnar styles, curvilinear forms, and symbolic decorations based on naturalistic plant motifs are all characteristics of the Shah Jahan style that can be found in the Taj Mahal Complex.

Inspired by a verse by Bibadal Khan, the imperial goldsmith and poet, and in common with most Mughal funeral architecture, the Taj Mahal complex was conceived as a replica on earth of the house of Mumtaz in paradise.

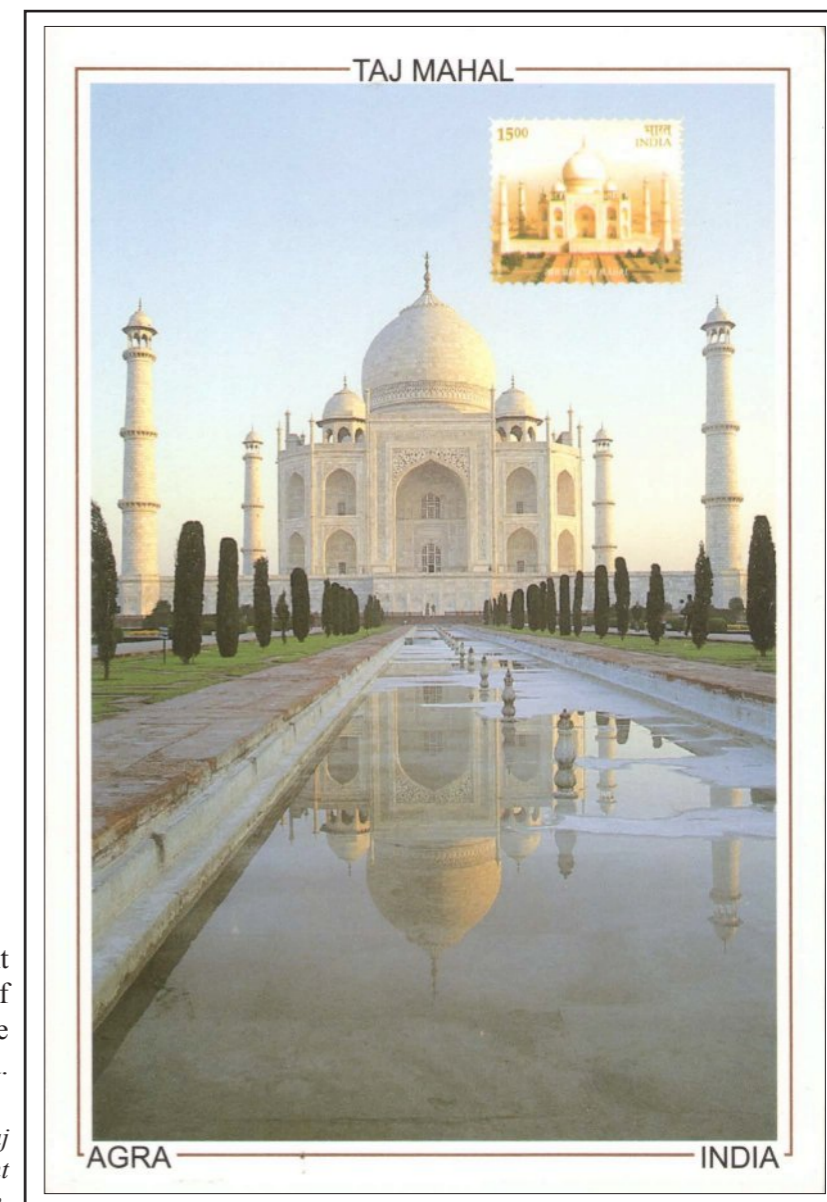
This theme permeates the entire complex and informs the design and appearance of all its elements. A number of secondary principles were also used, of which hierarchy is the most dominant. A deliberate interplay was established between the building's elements, its surface decoration, materials, geometric planning and its acoustics. This interplay extends from what can be seen with the senses, into religious, intellectual, mathematical and poetic ideas.



Layout of Taj Mahal Complex

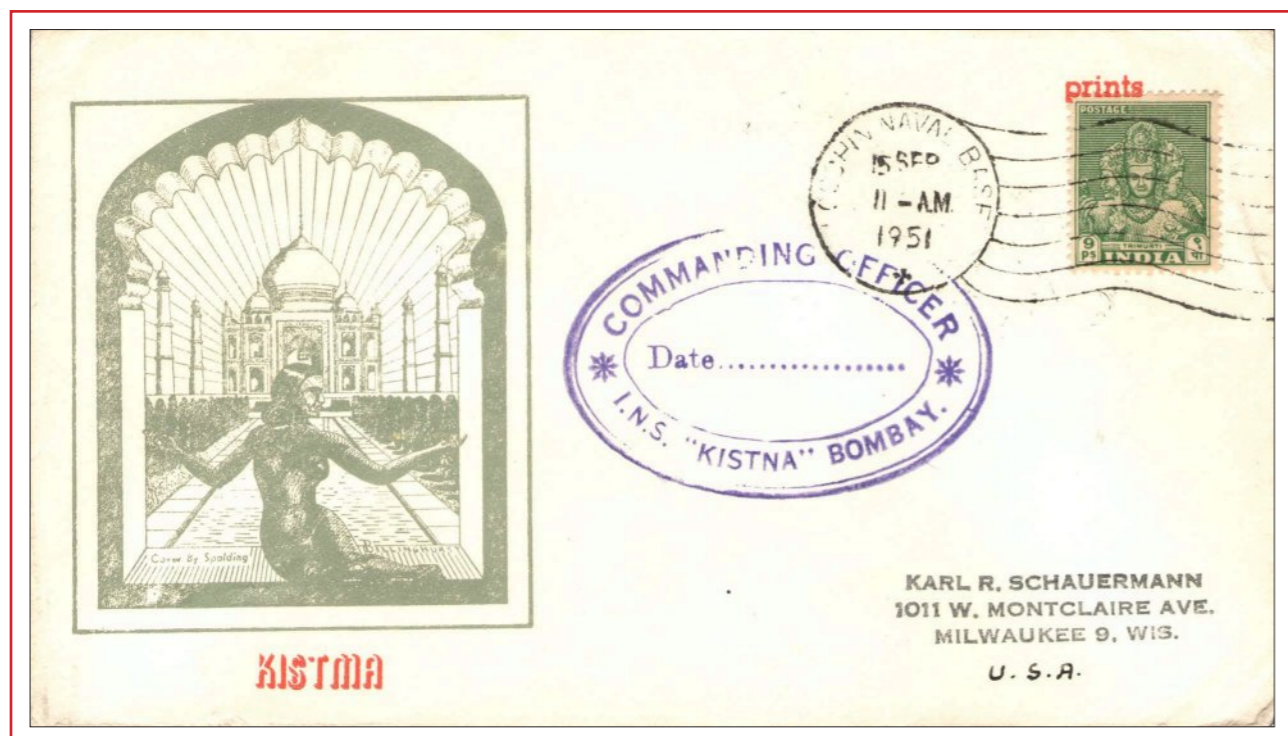


Greetings Post card issued by Department of Post, India on Taj Mahal. The Postcard shows Taj Mahal complex along with its garden, Charbagh etc.



In the Taj Mahal, the aim was to perfect the riverfront garden and enlarge it to a scale beyond the reach of ordinary mortals, to create here on earth and in the Mughal city paradisaical garden palace for the deceased.

Greetings Post card issued by Department of Post, India on Taj Mahal. The Postcard shows Taj Mahal along with waterfront and garden.

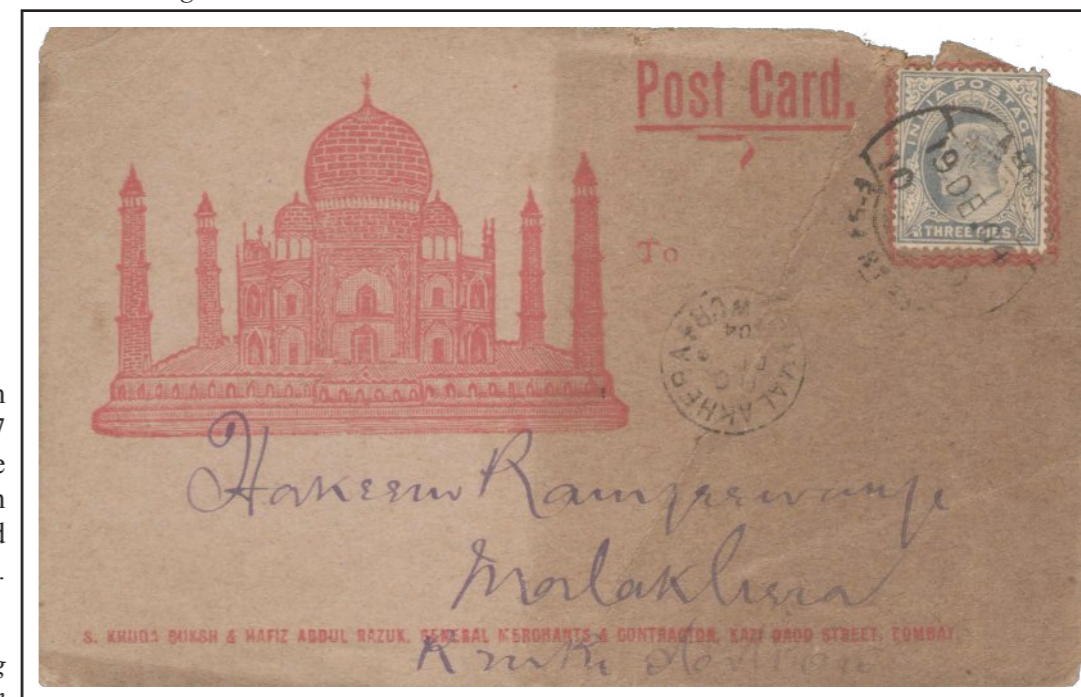


Cover sent by the Commanding Officer of I.M.S. Kistna at Cochin Naval Base to USA dated 15 September 1951. The motif shows the grandeur of Taj Mahal.

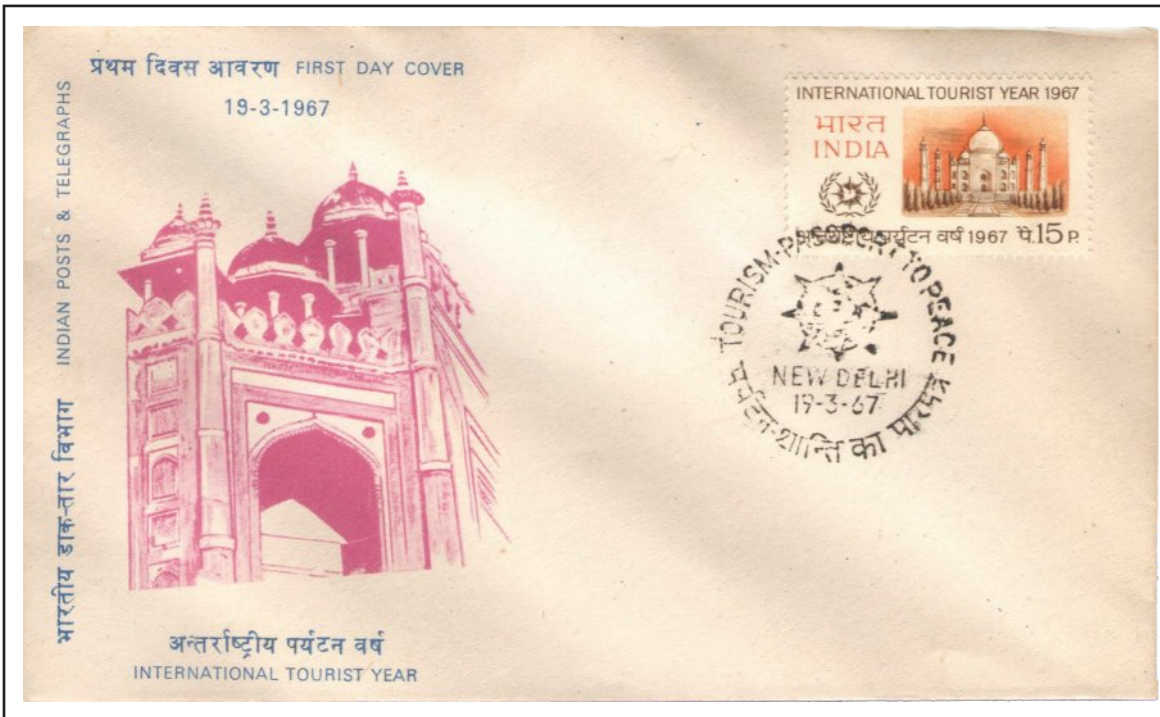
Ground Layout of The Taj Mahal Complex consists of the main north-south axis runs through the garden canal and the bazaar street. On it are set the dominant features: the mausoleum, the pool, the great gate, the Jilaukhana, the southern gate of the Jilaukhana, and the chauk (square) of the bazaar and caravanserai complex.

The entire complex sits on a platform measuring 300 metres in length and 8.7 metres in height on the banks of the Yamuna river. The platform is built with varying patterns of dark and light colored sandstone.

Bazar Card dated 19 December 1904 showing the motif of Taj Mahal on a raised platform



ARCHITECTURAL MARVEL

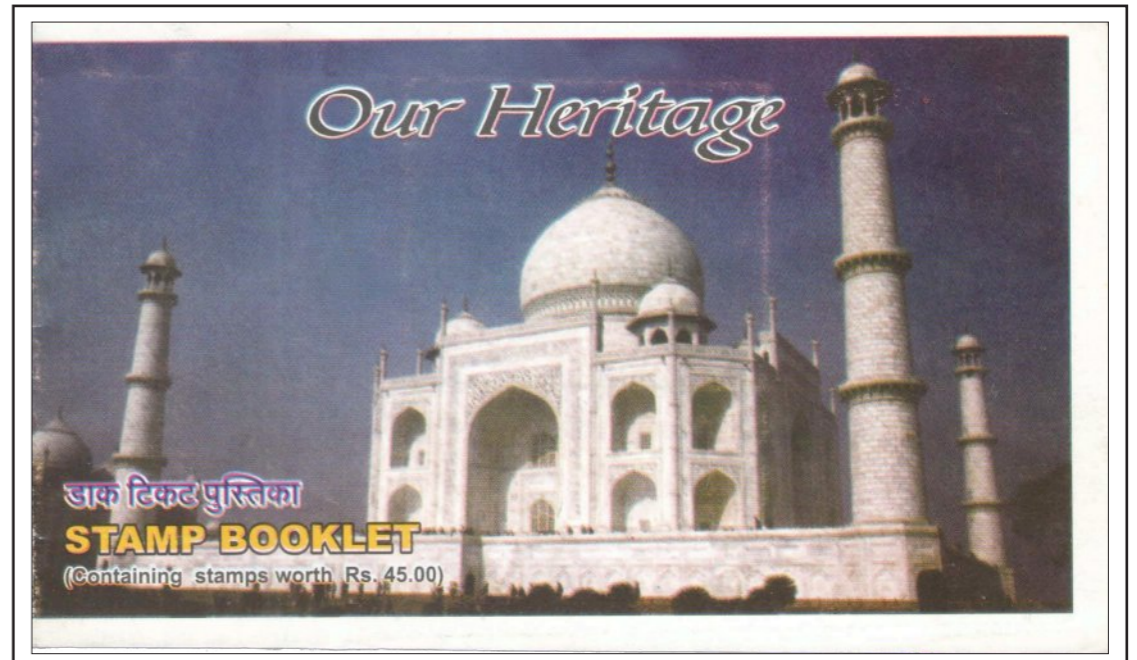


Main gateway of the Taj Mahal is built in red sandstone. The Arabic calligraphy from the Holy Quran and motifs of entwined flowers, leaves and vines spiraling down its niches. These motifs have been made by semi-precious stones inlaid in the white marble.

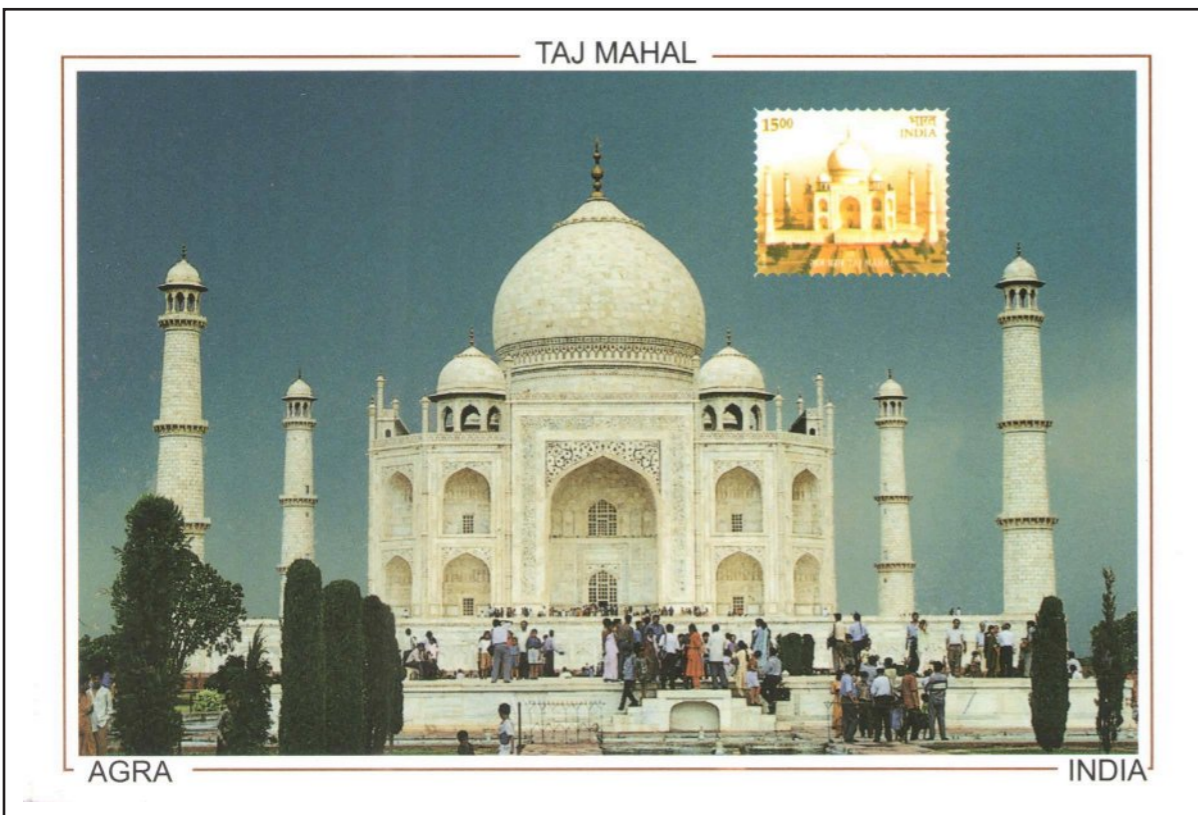
There is a red sand stone edifice outside this gate which is known as Fatehpur Begum another wife of Shah Jahan. It is erected on a beautiful terrace.

First Day cover issued on 19 March 1967 to commemorate the International Tourist Year 1967. Cover shows the motif of the Main entry gate of Taj Mahal.

Four minarets each more than 130 feet tall, display the designer's penchant for symmetry is set at the corners of the platform of the mausoleum. They were designed as working minarets, a traditional element of mosques, used by the muezzin to call the Islamic faithful to prayer. Each minaret is effectively divided into three equal parts by two working balconies that ring the tower.

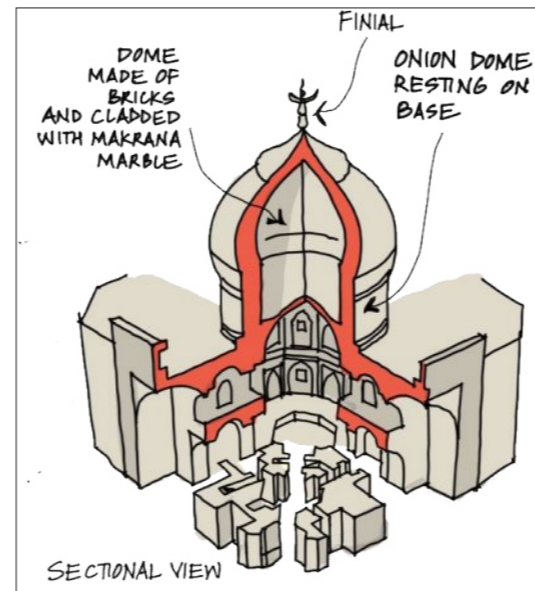


Stamp booklet issued by the Chief Post Master general, Chhattisgarh Circle showing the Taj Mahal along with its Minarets.

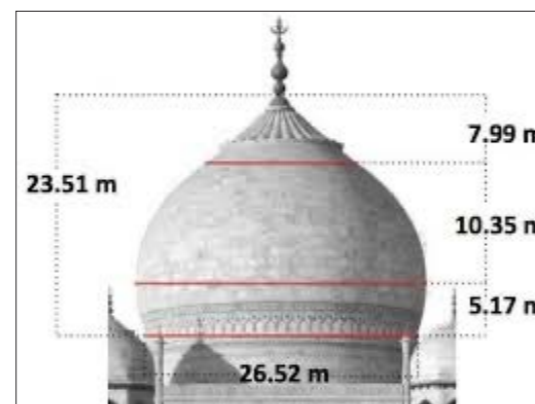


Greetings Post card issued by Department of Post, India on Taj Mahal. The Postcard shows Taj Mahal close-up view

The marble dome that surmounts the tomb is the most spectacular feature is accentuated as it sits on a cylindrical "drum" which is roughly 23 feet high. Because of its shape, the dome is often called an onion dome. The top is decorated with a lotus design, which also serves to accentuate its height. The shape of the dome is emphasised by four smaller domed chatris (kiosks) placed at its corners, which replicate the onion shape of the main dome. Their columned bases open through the roof of the tomb and provide light to the interior. Tall decorative spires extend from edges of base walls, and provide visual emphasis to the height of the dome. The lotus motif is repeated on both the chatris and guldastas. The dome and chatris are topped by a gilded finial, which mixes traditional Persian and Hindu decorative elements.



Sectional view of the main dome of Taj Mahal

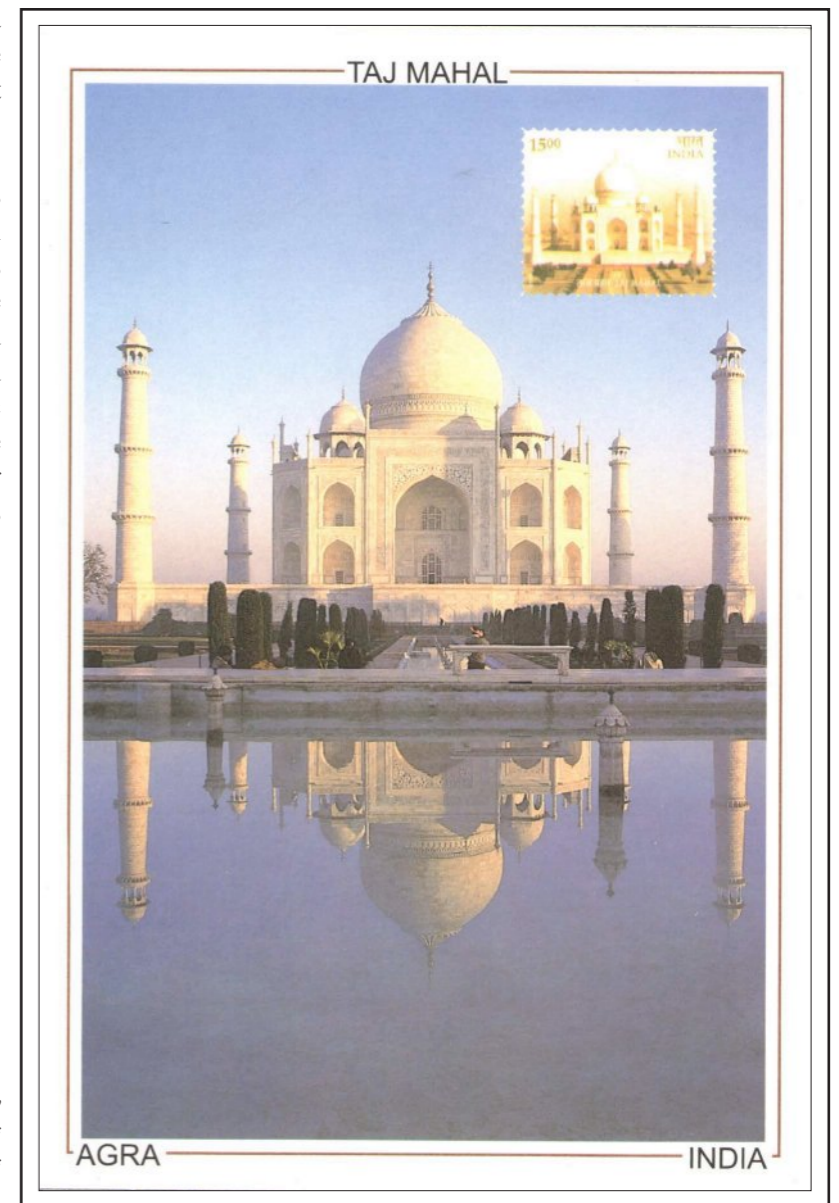


Main dome dimensions

The mausoleum sits on a plinth, decorated with delicate relief carvings (munabbat kari) of plant elements. This type of ornament, conforming to the principles of sensuous attention to detail and selective naturalism, is reserved for the lowest zone of the building, where it could be immediately appreciated by the viewer. Naturalistic ornament also appears above the plinth, in the spectacular flowering plants of the dados of the pishtaq halls.

The main dome, which is the most prominent feature of the Taj Mahal's architecture, is flanked by four smaller domed kiosks (chattris). The overall design features a unique double dome, allowing it to maintain a proportional look both inside and out.

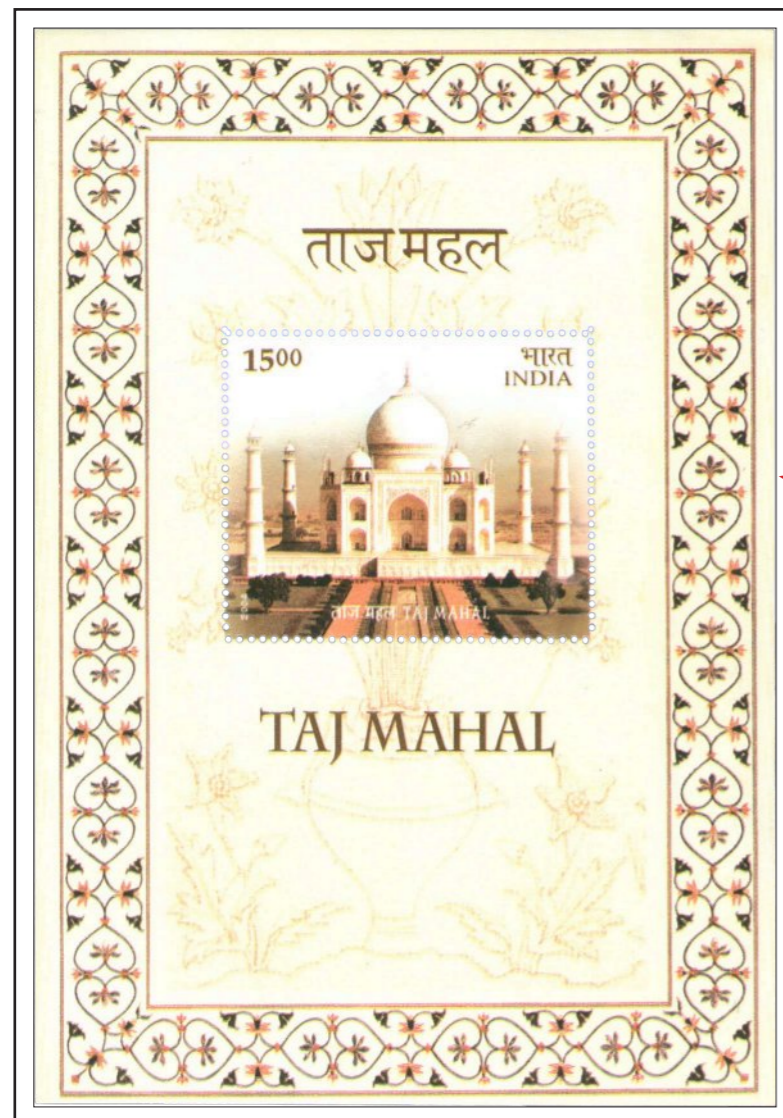
Greetings Post card issued by Department of Post, India on Taj Mahal. The Postcard shows Taj Mahal seated on Marble platform.



ARTISTIC ELEMENTS

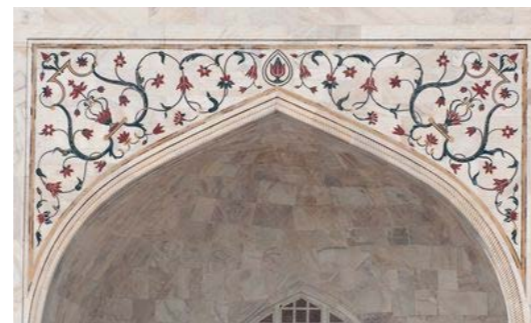
The Taj Mahal is a masterpiece of Mughal architecture, characterized by perfect bilateral symmetry, white marble construction, and intricate pietra dura inlay work using precious stones. Artistic elements include delicate floral carvings, calligraphic verses from the Quran, perforated marble jalis (screens), and a geometric charbagh garden, creating a harmonious blend of light and symmetry.

Pietra Dura (Lapidary Inlay): The exterior and interior are decorated with thousands of semi-precious stones (lapis lazuli, jade, crystal, turquoise) inlaid in white marble, forming detailed floral and vine motifs.



Pietre dure is an Italian plural meaning “hard rocks” or hard stones; the singular pietra dura is also encountered in Italian. In Italian, but not in English, the term embraces all gem engraving and hard stone carving, which is the artistic carving of three-dimensional objects in semi-precious stone, normally from a single piece, for example in Chinese jade. The traditional convention in English has been to use the singular pietra dura just to denote multi-colored inlay work.

Pietra Dura, the inlay work seen on the walls of Taj Mahal.



The Pietra Dura inlay at Taj Mahal

Souvenir Sheet issued by India Post on 16 December 2004 commemorating Taj Mahal.

The border of the Souvenir Sheet and the faint middle design represents the pietra dura inlay work that is seen on Taj Mahal.



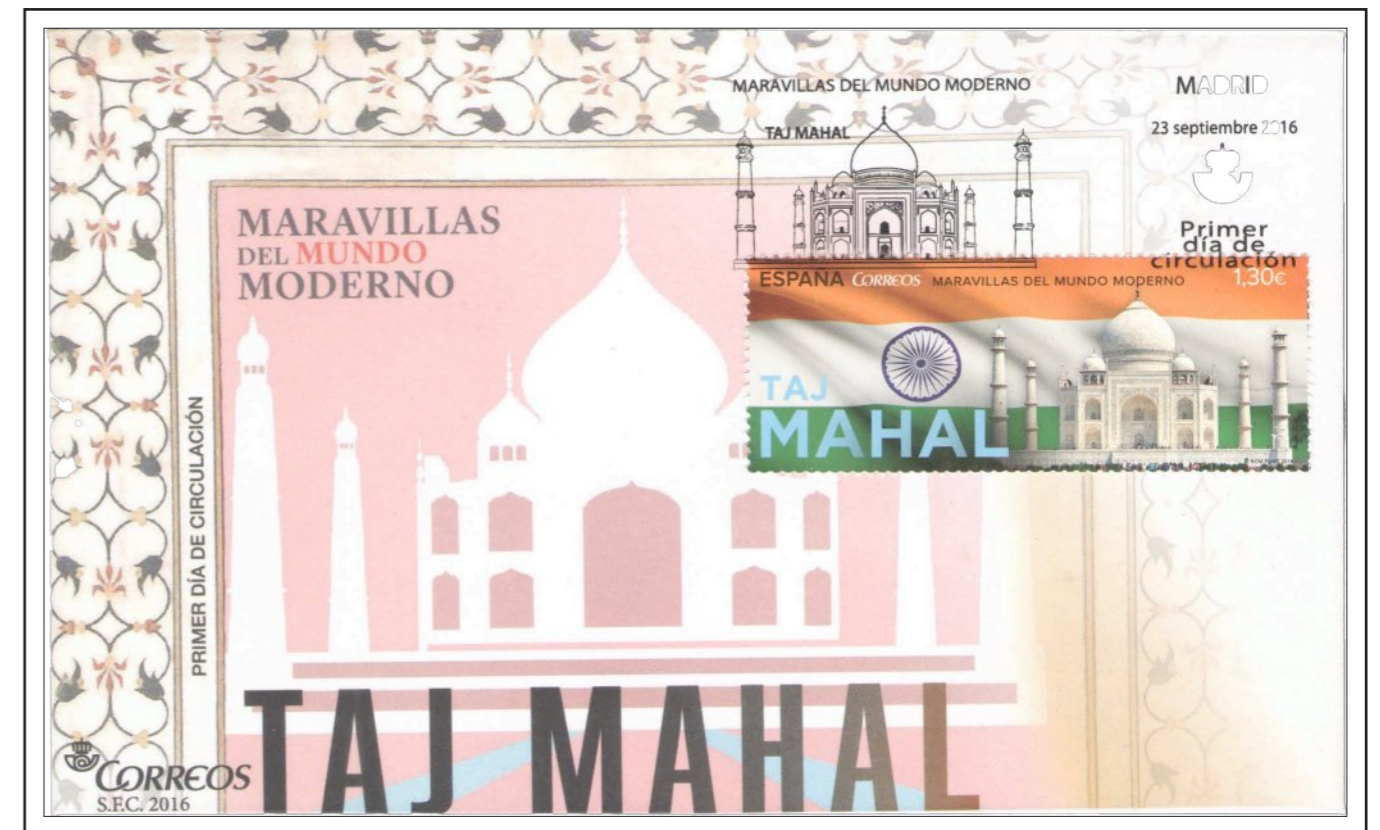
Telephone calling card showing the picture of Taj Mahal

The special cancellation on the post card depicts the Inlay Work (Pietra Dura) found on Taj Mahal.

The Special Cancellation was issued on 16 May 1993 at Dheradhun during Philex 93 exhibition.



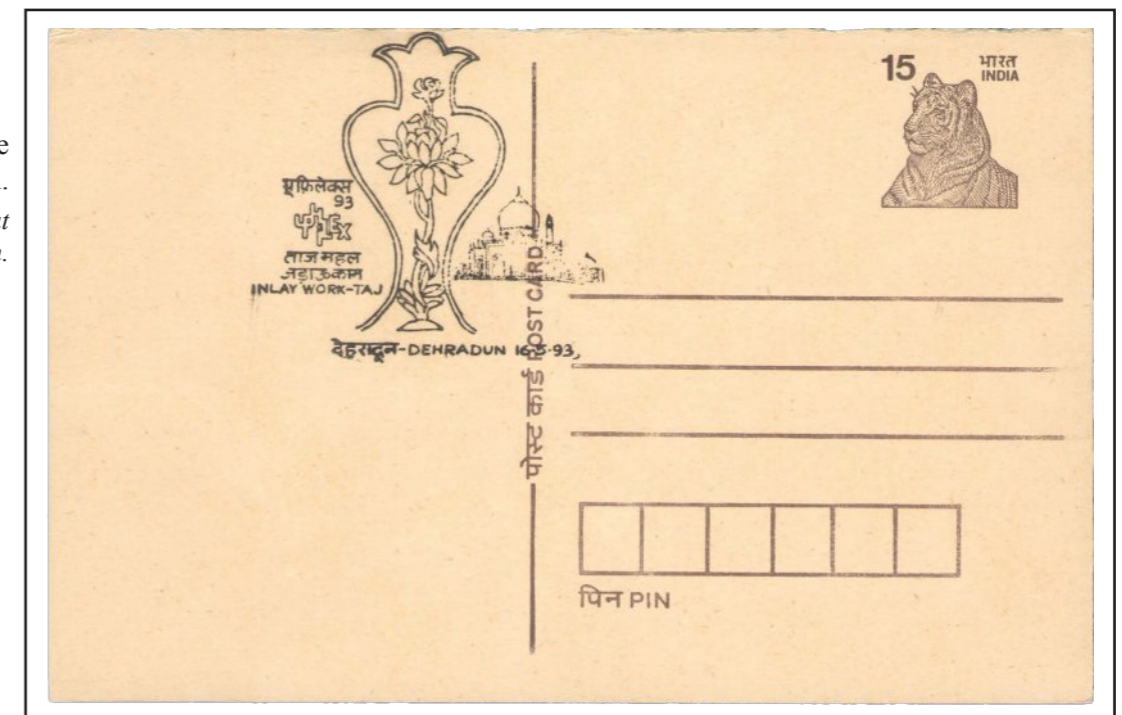
Floral motif using Pietra Dura on the pillars and walls of Taj Mahal.



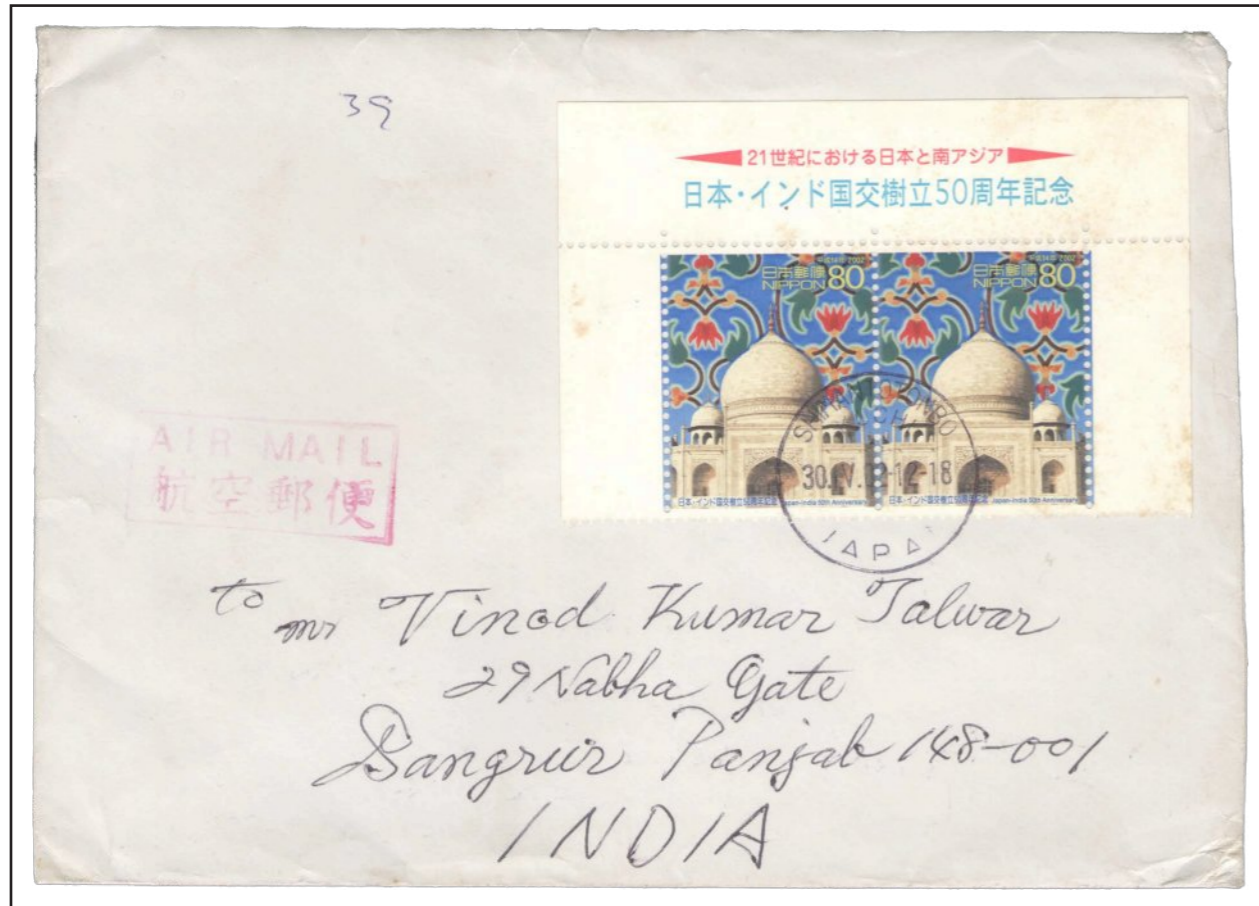
First Day cover issued by Spain to commemorate Taj Mahal.

The left and top border of the cover represents the pietra dura inlay work that is seen on Taj Mahal.

By the early part of the 17th century, smaller objects produced by the Opificio were widely diffused throughout Europe, and as far east to the court of the Mughals in India, where the form was imitated and reinterpreted in a native style; its most sumptuous expression is found in the Taj Mahal. In Mughal India, pietra dura was known as parchin kari, literally ‘inlay’ or ‘driven-in’ work.



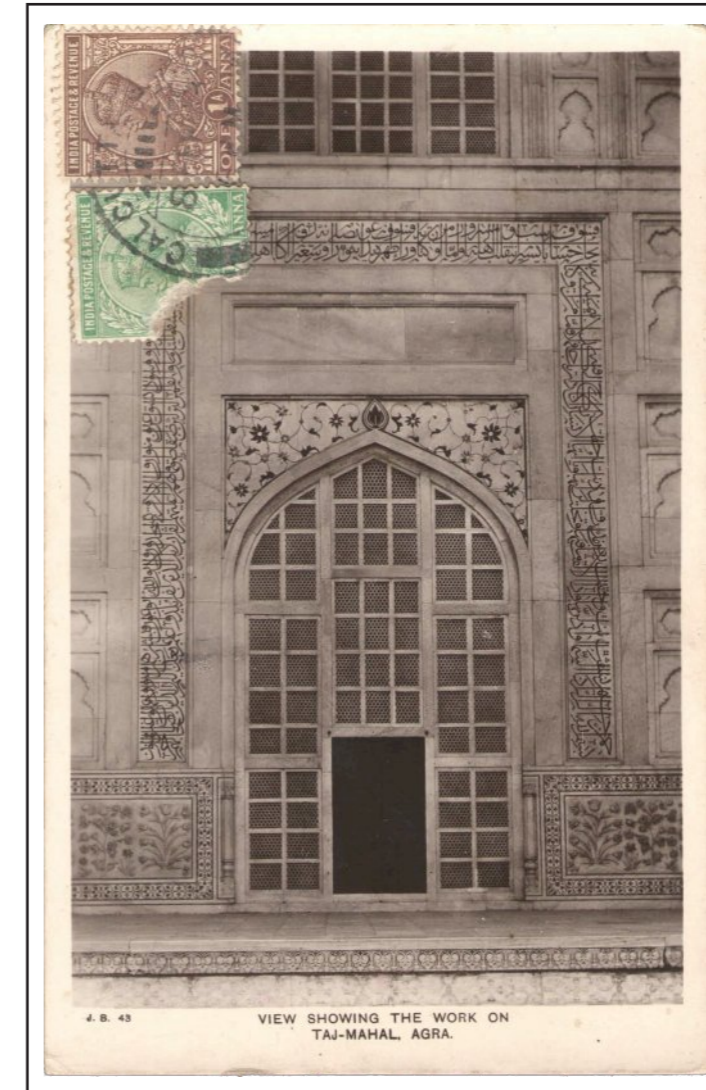
ARTISTIC ELEMENTS



Key Aspects of Pietra Dura in the Taj Mahal:

- **Technique:** The parchinkari technique involves cutting semi-precious stones (such as malachite, jasper, jade, and lapis lazuli) with extreme precision to fit into carved slots in the white marble, creating seamless patterns.
- **Application:** The inlay work is prevalent throughout the structure, most notably on the cenotaphs of Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal, as well as on arches and walls, which feature intricate floral motifs and Arabic calligraphy.
- **Significance:** It serves both aesthetic and symbolic purposes, representing “paradise” through nature-themed, vibrant designs that add color to the pure white marble.
- **Origins & Legacy:** While pietra dura originated in 16th-century Italy, it was adopted and refined under Mughal emperor Shah Jahan. This craft has been passed down through generations of artisans in Agra, who still use traditional methods to maintain this heritage art.

Cover dated 30 April 2002 sent from Nakamura City, Japan to Punjab, India showing a pair of stamps depicting Taj Mahal and in the background pietra dura.



Calligraphy:

The Taj Mahal’s intricate calligraphy, primarily featuring Thuluth script Qur’anic verses, was designed and executed by the Persian master calligrapher Amanat Khan Shirazi.

His signature, “written by the insignificant being, Amanat Khan,” is inscribed within the white marble, which is inlaid with black Jasper.

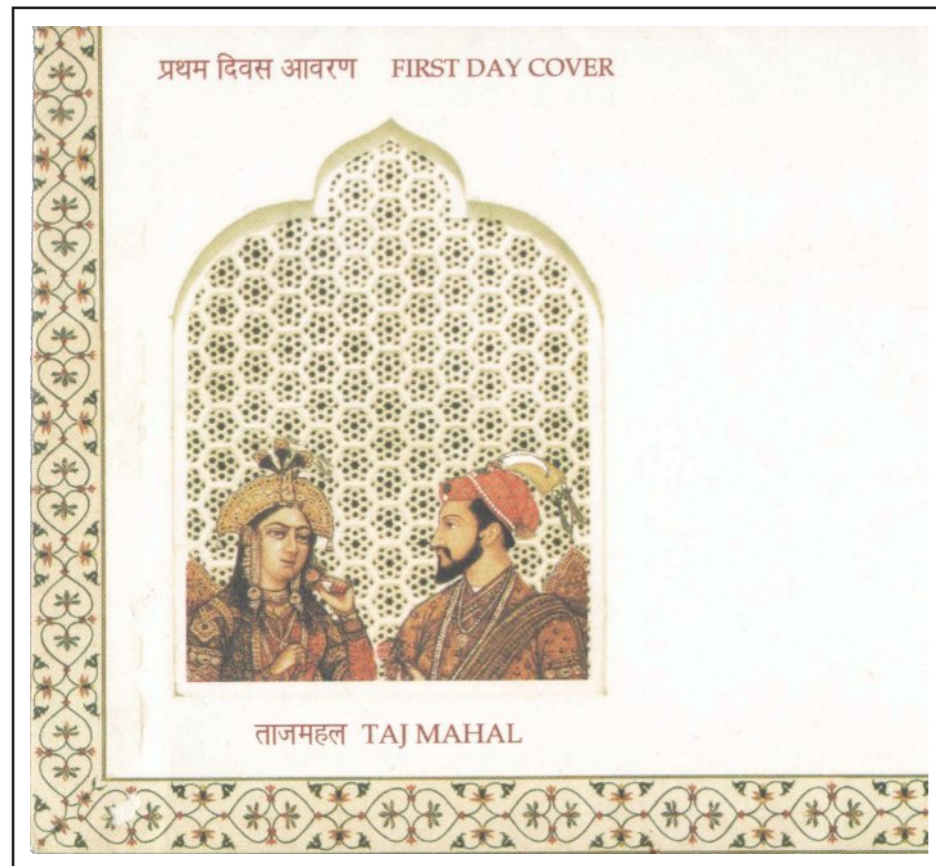
The inscriptions feature 22 passages (14 full chapters) from the Quran, including Surah Fajr at the entrance, which focuses on judgment and paradise.



Calligraphy Text

Post card showing the Entrance to the Taj Mahal with its Jali Screens and Calligraphy all around.

Jali Screens: Intricate marble screens (jalis), crafted with geometric and floral patterns, are used to filter light and provide privacy, creating a soft, ethereal atmosphere inside.



The cover depicts in the background of Mumtaz Mahal and Shah Jahan the typical Jali Screens seen in Taj Mahal.

The pietra dura work (or parchin kari) inside the Taj Mahal is a masterpiece of Mughal artistry, featuring highly polished, semi-precious stones inlaid into white marble to create intricate floral designs. This “stone painting” technique decorates the cenotaphs, screens, and walls, using materials like lapis lazuli, turquoise, and jasper.

Cenotaphs: The graves of Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal are extensively decorated with intricate flower motifs.

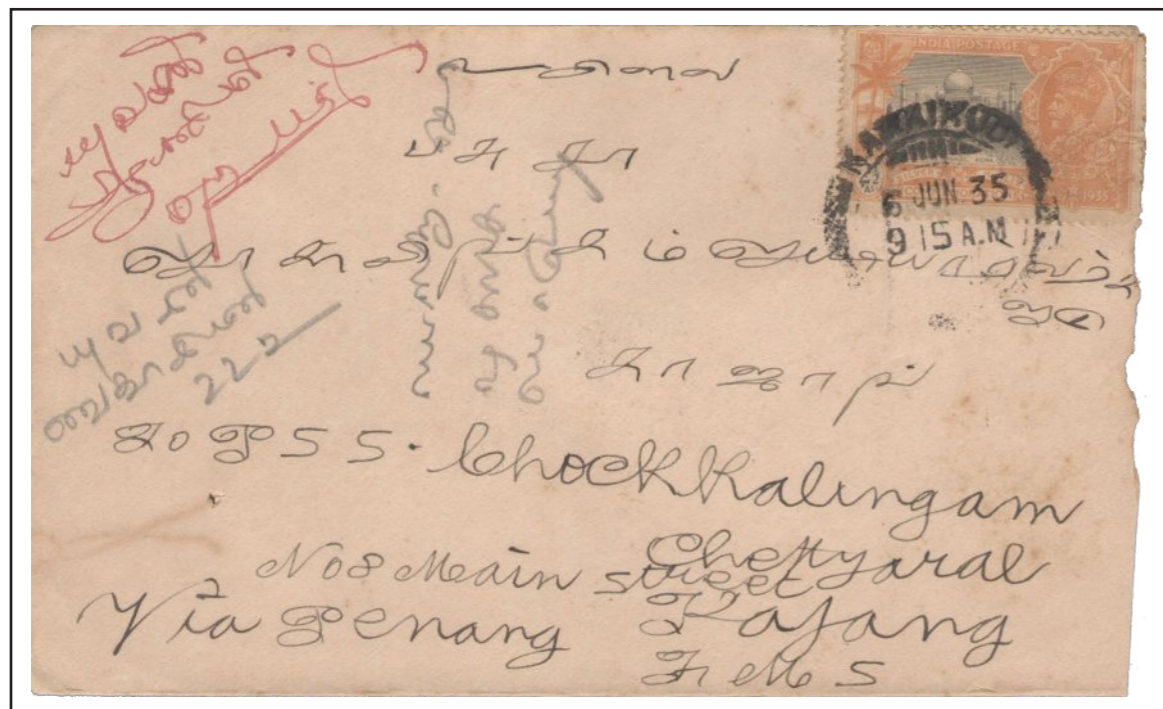


Post card showing graves of Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal decorated with flower motifs made using pietra dura technique

First Day Cover issued by India Post on 16 December 2004 to commemorate the issue of a postage stamp on Taj Mahal.

TAJ MAHAL IN PHILATELY

The Taj Mahal is a premier theme in philately, frequently featured on postage stamps, first-day covers, and postcards issued by India and various international postal administrations to showcase world heritage. Iconic issues include the 1967 International Tourist Year stamp, 2004 Indian issues, and special, commemorative issues.



Letter dated 5 June 1935 sent from Karaikudi to Penang

Letter was affixed with Silver Jubilee Commemoration stamp of King George V, issued on 6 May 1935 showing the bust of King George V and **Taj Mahal**.

Perforation : 13½ x 14
Watermark: Multiple Star

Letter was affixed with Rs. 5 stamp from the First Definitive series of India issued on 15 August 1949 showing **Taj Mahal**.

Perforation : 14
Watermark: Multiple Star



Rs. 5 stamp from the First Definitive series of India issued on 15 August 1949 showing **Taj Mahal**.



Registered Air Mail letter from Delhi to Philadelphia, USA dated 11 September 1956



Post Card issued by Karnataka postal circle showing the Silver Jubilee Commemoration Stamp of King George V along with Taj Mahal.

Letter was affixed with Rs. 15 stamp issued on 16 December 2004 by India Post commemorating **Taj Mahal**.

Perforation : 14
No Watermark

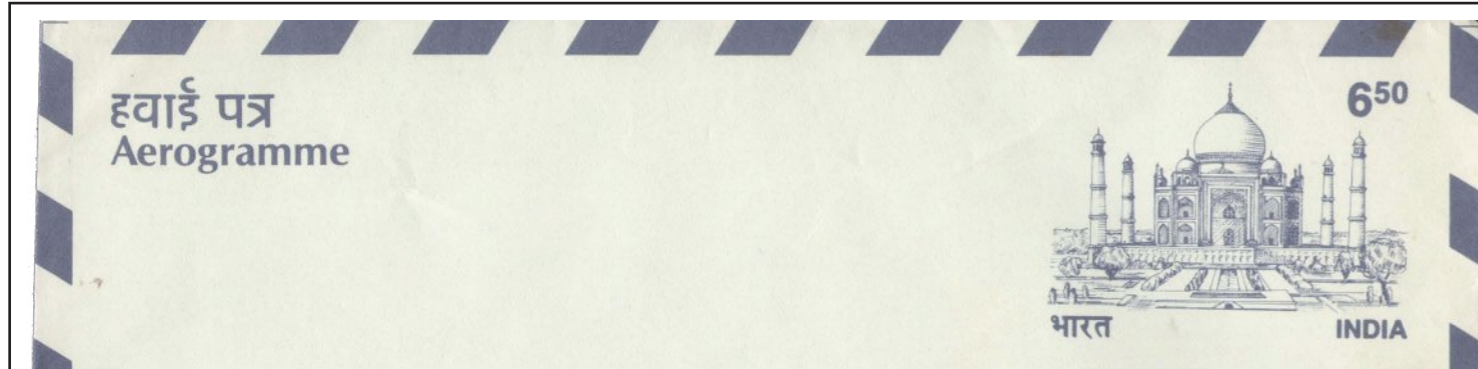


Stamp issued by India Post on 19 March 1967 commemorating International Tourist Year showing the image of **Taj Mahal**.



Special cover issued during INDIA '89 exhibition held at Seoul, Korea showing the image of Taj Mahal and the 2004 issue of the Taj Mahal Stamp.

TAJ MAHAL IN PHILATELY



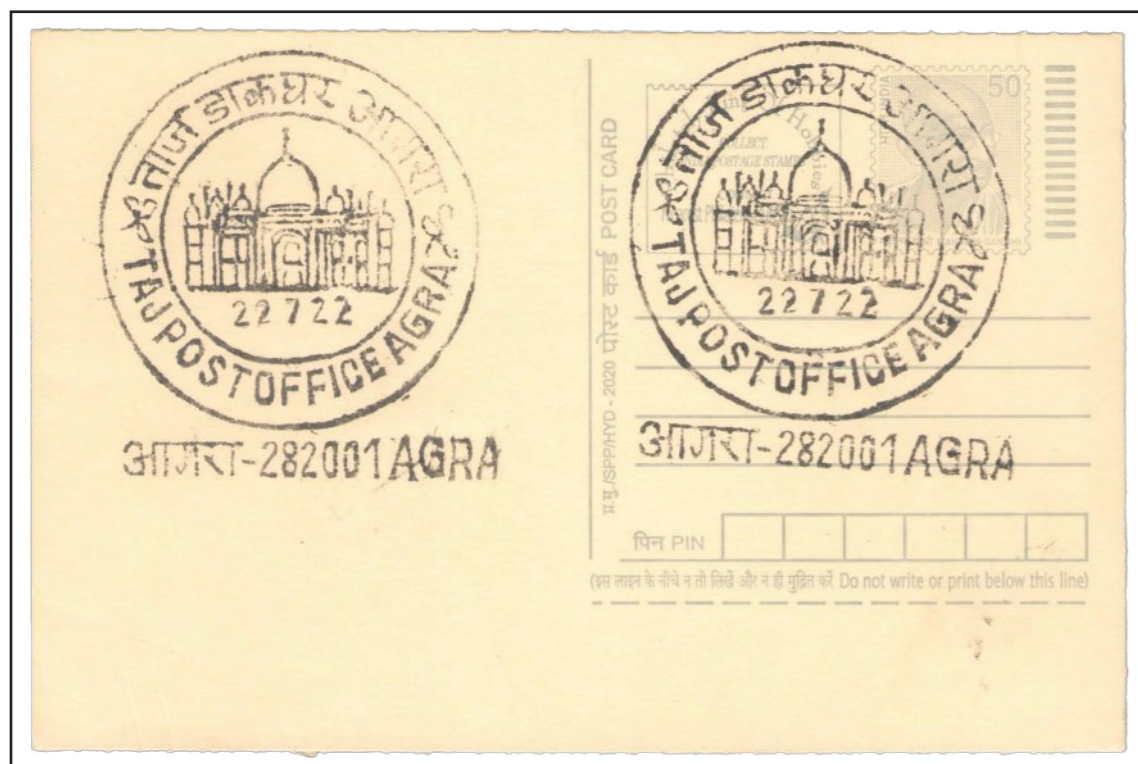
1995 & 2002
Aerogrammes issued by India Post of value 650 & 800 showing the image of Taj Mahal.

India Post has used the image of Taj Mahal extensively to promote International Tourism to India.



Bazaar Card sent to Barsi dated 10 July 1909.

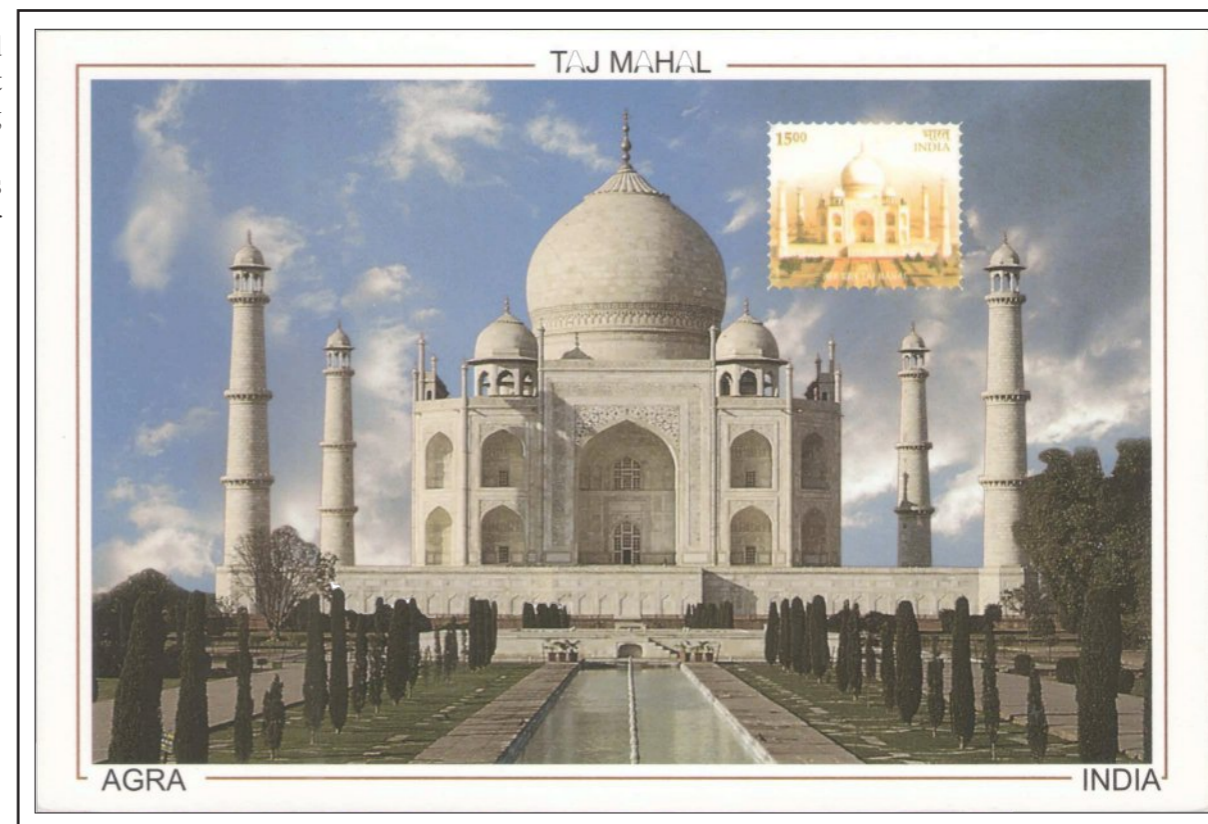
Privately prepared Bazaar Card showing Taj Mahal



Post card showing the Permanent Pictorial Cancellation of Agra (PIN Code 282001) post office.

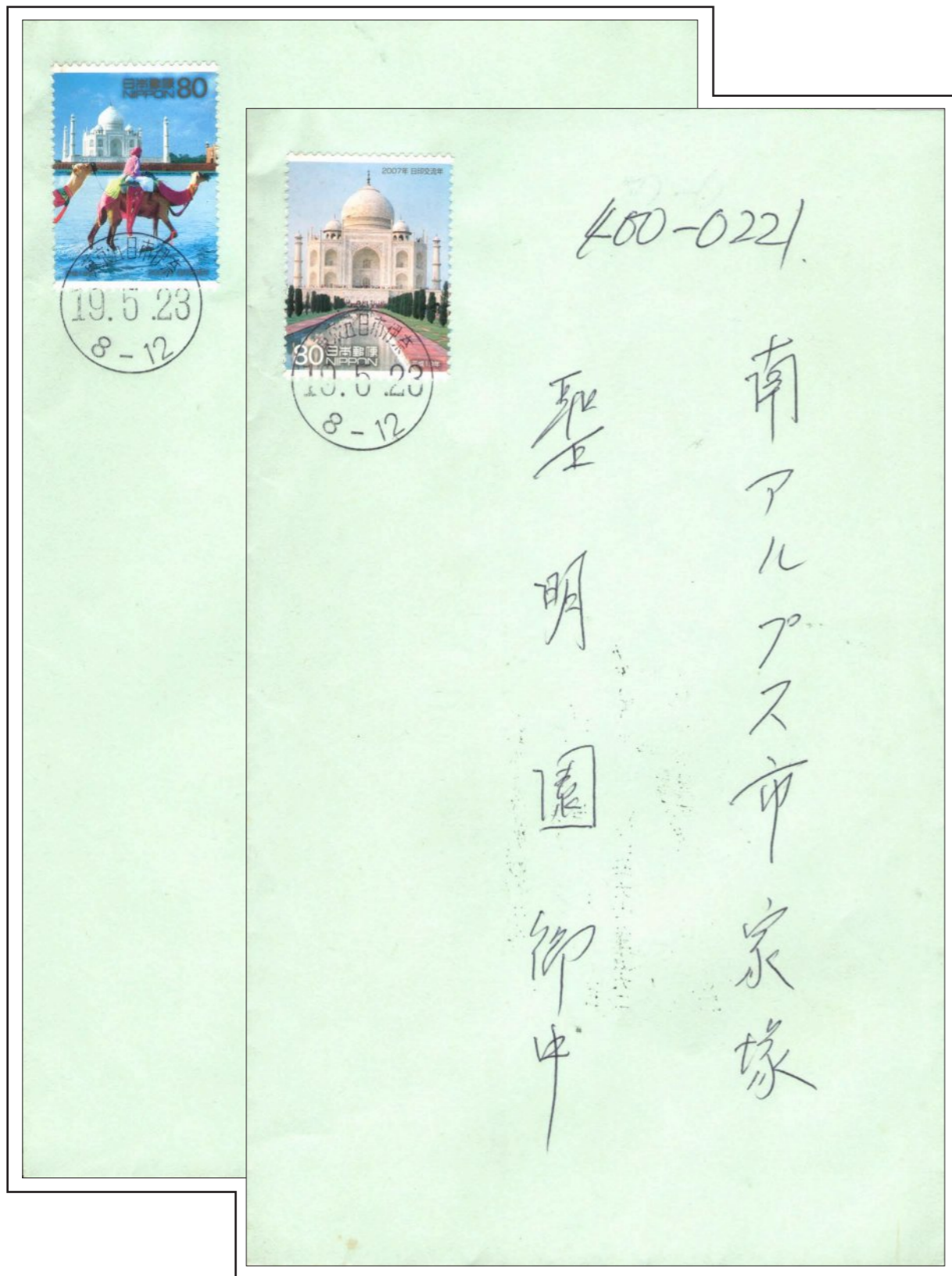
Greetings Post Card issued by Department of Posts, India showing the front view of the Taj Mahal. This postcard is issued by the Postmaster General, Agra.

The cancellation has evolved from a seal mark to machine franking, yet retaining its significance in the form of a pictorial cancellation which would be a permanent post mark in a post office. These pictorial cancellations are artistically designed to enhance the importance of a historic site, a tourist center, the uniqueness of architecture in a place of tourist interest or even a Philatelic exhibition of national or international importance. Like stamps, these cancellations have a message of their own to convey.



TAJ MAHAL IN PHILATELY

Several foreign countries and international organizations have issued stamps featuring the Taj Mahal, often to celebrate Indian heritage or as part of World Heritage series. These stamps highlight the Taj Mahal's enduring reputation as a symbol of Indian culture, architectural beauty acknowledging the monument's global significance.



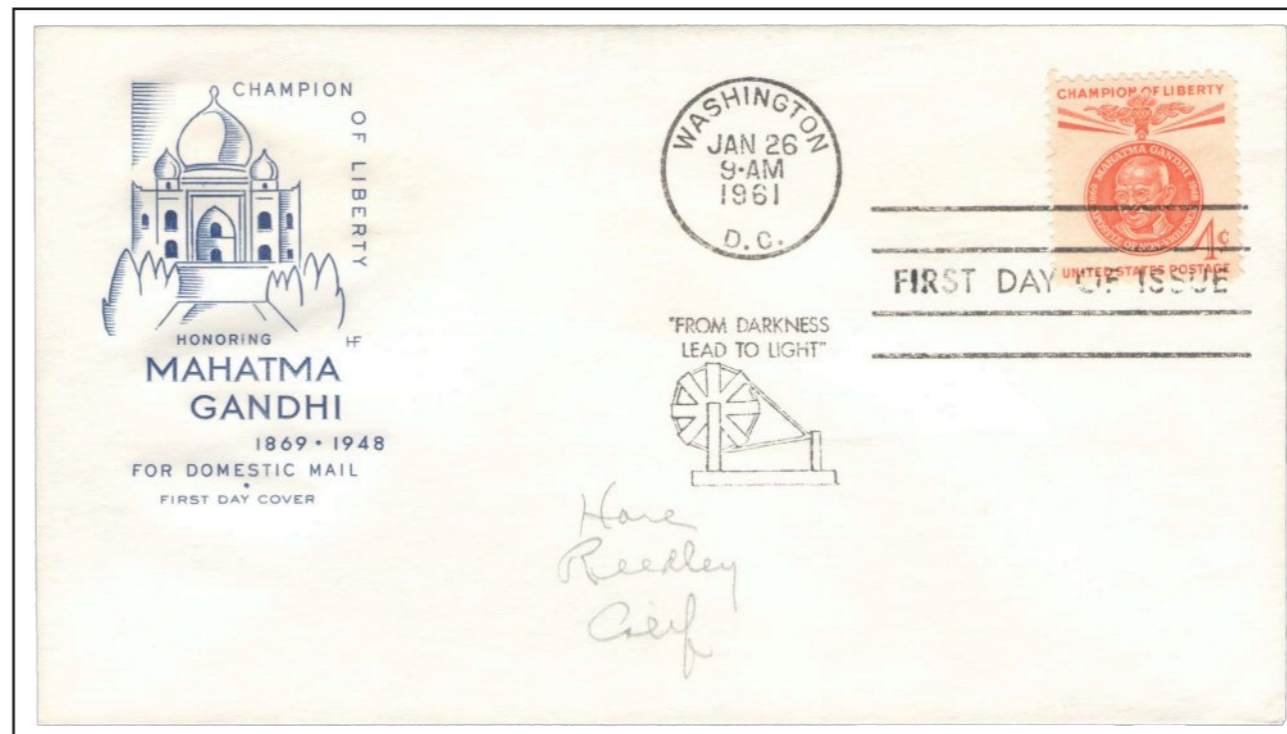
Two letters from Japan dated 19 May 2023 showing stamps with Taj Mahal.

Stamps from Japan issued on 23 May 2007 commemorating the Japan-India Friendship year 2007. Both stamp showcases Taj Mahal.

Perforation: 13½
No Watermark

Stamps from United States of America issued on 26 January 1961 depicting Mahatma Gandhi as Champion of Liberty and the First Day Cover showcasing the motif of Taj Mahal.

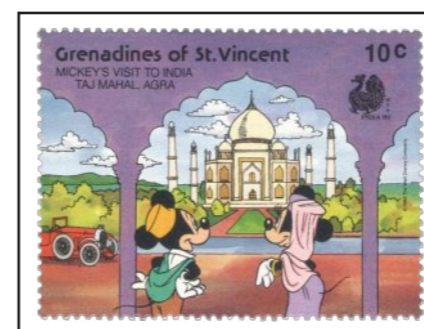
Perforation: 10½ x 11
No Watermark



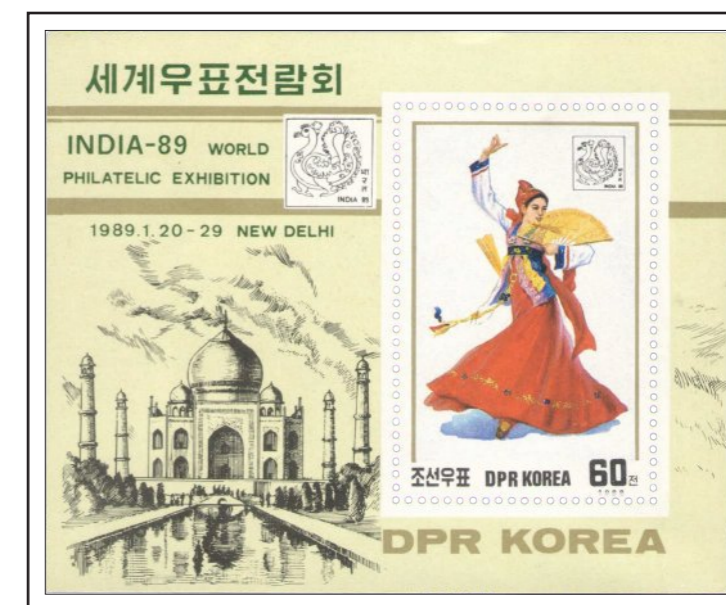
Champion of Liberty | Mahatma Gandhi Stamp | First Day of Issue Cover | Honouring Mahatma Gandhi showing Taj Mahal motif on the cover with wings of DOVE embracing Taj Mahal as a symbol of peace.



Stamps issued by Central African Republic, the top stamp show cases Taj Mahal.



Stamp issued by Grenadines of St. Vincent on 20 January 1989 commemorating the International Stamp Exhibition INDIA '89 - New Delhi and showcasing Mickey Mouse visiting Taj Mahal.



Stamps issued by North Korea on 15 December 1988 commemorating the 100th Birth Anniversary of Jawaharlal Nehru. The miniature Sheet depicting Taj Mahal.

TOURISM AND CULTURAL IMPACT

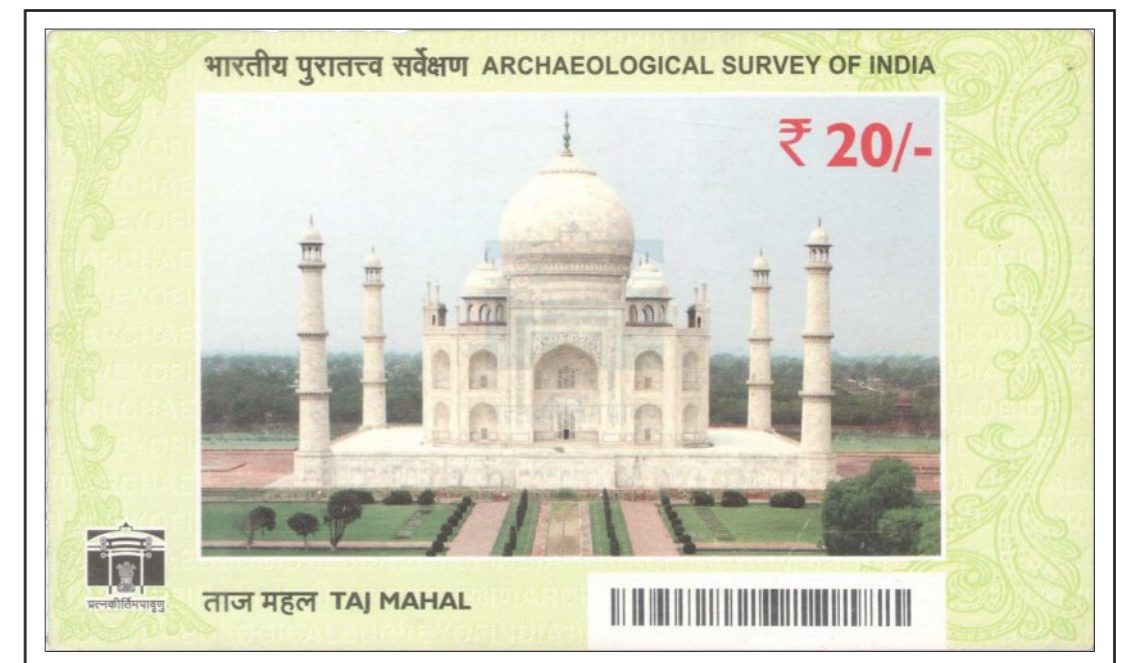
The Taj Mahal, a 17th-century UNESCO site in Agra, India, is a premier global tourist destination attracting over 7 million annual visitors, generating immense revenue but also causing environmental strain. It symbolizes immense cultural value as an architectural masterpiece and a monument to eternal love, deeply influencing Indian history.



Visit India Cover issued by Bombay G.P.O. showing Taj Mahal as the prime tourist destination of India along with International Tourist Year 1967 stamp of Taj Mahal and the slogan "TOURISM PASSPORT TO PEACE" in the special cancellation.

Tourism Impact

- **Economic Driver:** As a "bucket list" destination, it drives the local economy in Agra and supports the tourism industry through guided tours, hotels, and handicrafts.
- **Visitor Management:** Due to high volume, authorities use timed ticketing and have designated it a plastic-free zone.
- **Challenges:** The massive influx necessitates, and the government enforces, strict pollution controls, including the Taj Trapezium Zone (a defined area protecting the monument from emissions).



Entry Ticket to Taj Mahal for Indians (Costing Rs. 20/-).



Special Cover issued by the Chief Postmaster General, UP Circle, Lucknow dated 18 February 2016 to commemorate Taj Mahotsav. The cover depicts Taj Mahal in an artistic way.

Initiated in 1992, the Taj Mahotsav in Agra is a prestigious 10-day annual festival (Feb 18–27) celebrating India's rich arts, crafts, culture, and cuisine near the Eastern Gate of the Taj Mahal. The festival brings together over 400 artisans nationwide, promoting local traditions and boosting tourism.

Key Aspects of the Festival:

- **Art and Craft:** Showcases diverse Indian handicrafts, including wood/stone carvings, bamboo work, Chikankari, and silk items.
- **Cultural Programs:** Features traditional dances, music, and folk performances representing various Indian states.
- **Cuisine:** A culinary delight offering a range of traditional Indian dishes and regional flavors.
- **Venue:** Held at Shilpgram, providing a rustic backdrop for the cultural celebrations, organized by the Uttar Pradesh Tourism department.

The silver jubilee of this event was celebrated in 2016, marking a quarter-century of showcasing India's vibrant heritage.

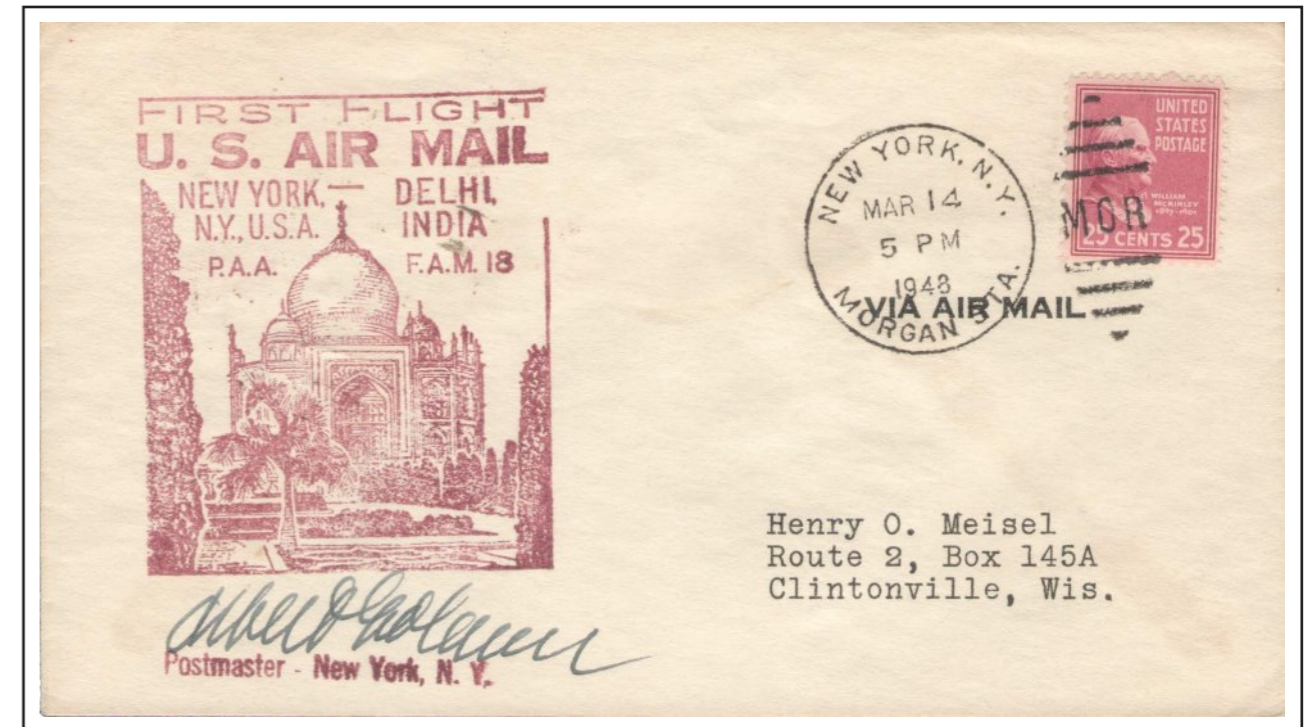
TOURISM AND CULTURAL IMPACT



International Tourist Year special cover issued with "TOURISM PASSPORT TO PEACE" special cancellation issued at New Delhi depicting the Postage Stamp depicting Taj Mahal.

The UN declared the 1967 International Tourist Year on November 4th, 1966. The year-long campaign aimed to promote tourism as a means of fostering international understanding, economic development, and cultural exchange.

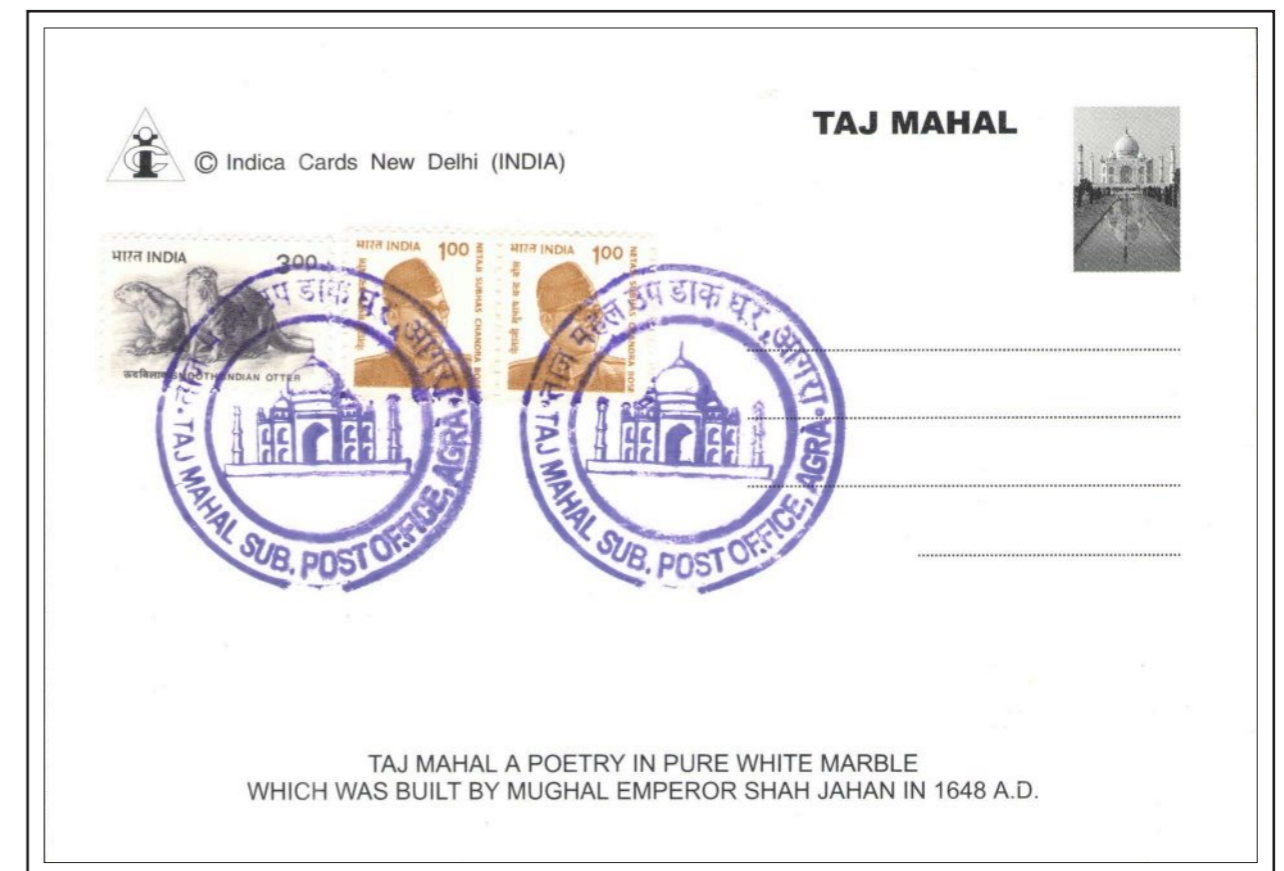
This stamp was issued India Post in commemoration of the 1967 International Tourist Year. This effort was part of a global initiative to promote tourism and encourage people to explore and appreciate different cultures and destinations.



First Flight cover from New York to Delhi dated 14 March 1948 depicting the motif of Taj Mahal on cover promoting the tourism to India and Taj Mahal.



First day Cover of Bi-Centennial of Man's First Flight dated 21 November 1983 - One stamp depicting Hot Air Balloons flying over Taj Mahal. This is mainly done by India Post to promote tourism to India and to Taj Mahal.

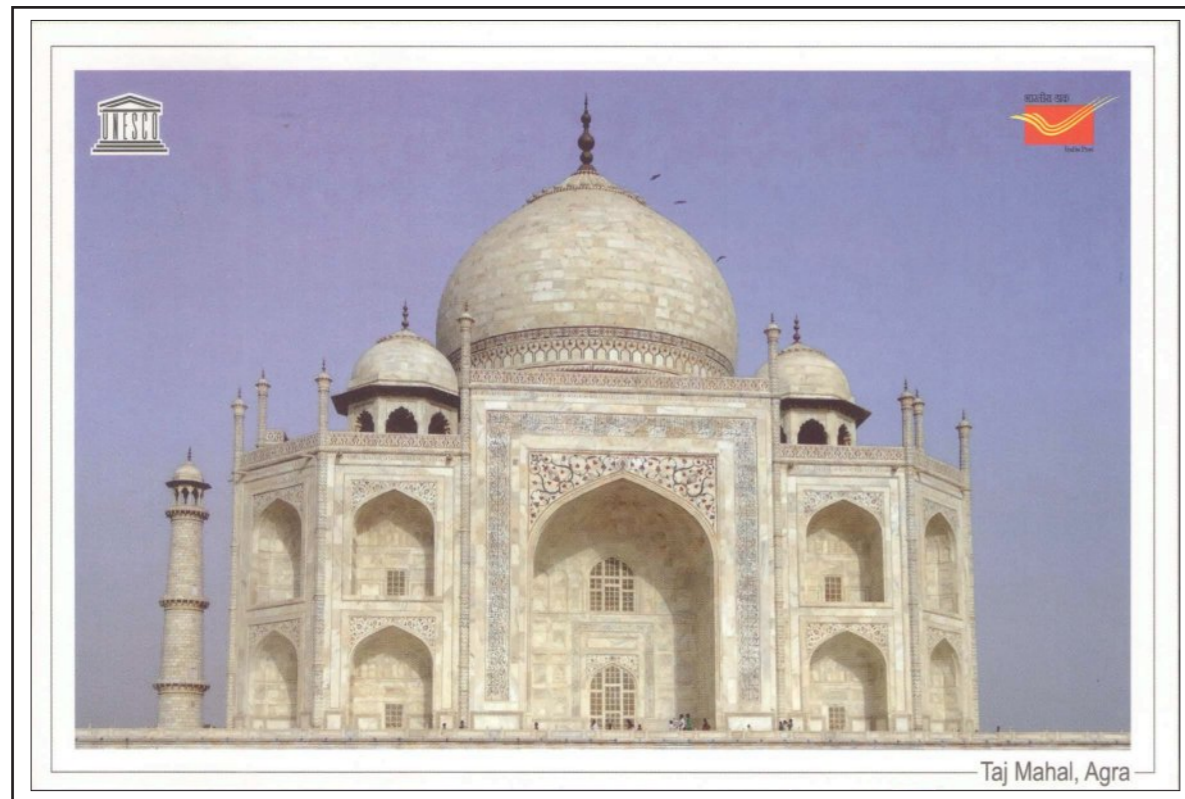


Post card on Taj Mahal issued by India Post showing the Permanent Pictorial Cancellation of Taj Mahal Sub Post Office, Agra. Permanent Pictorial Cancellations are issued by India Post to promote tourism to that area.

Permanent pictorial cancellations are artistically designed to enhance the importance of a historic site, a tourist center, the uniqueness of architecture in a place of tourist interest or even a Philatelic exhibition of national or international importance. Like stamps, these cancellations have a message of their own to convey.

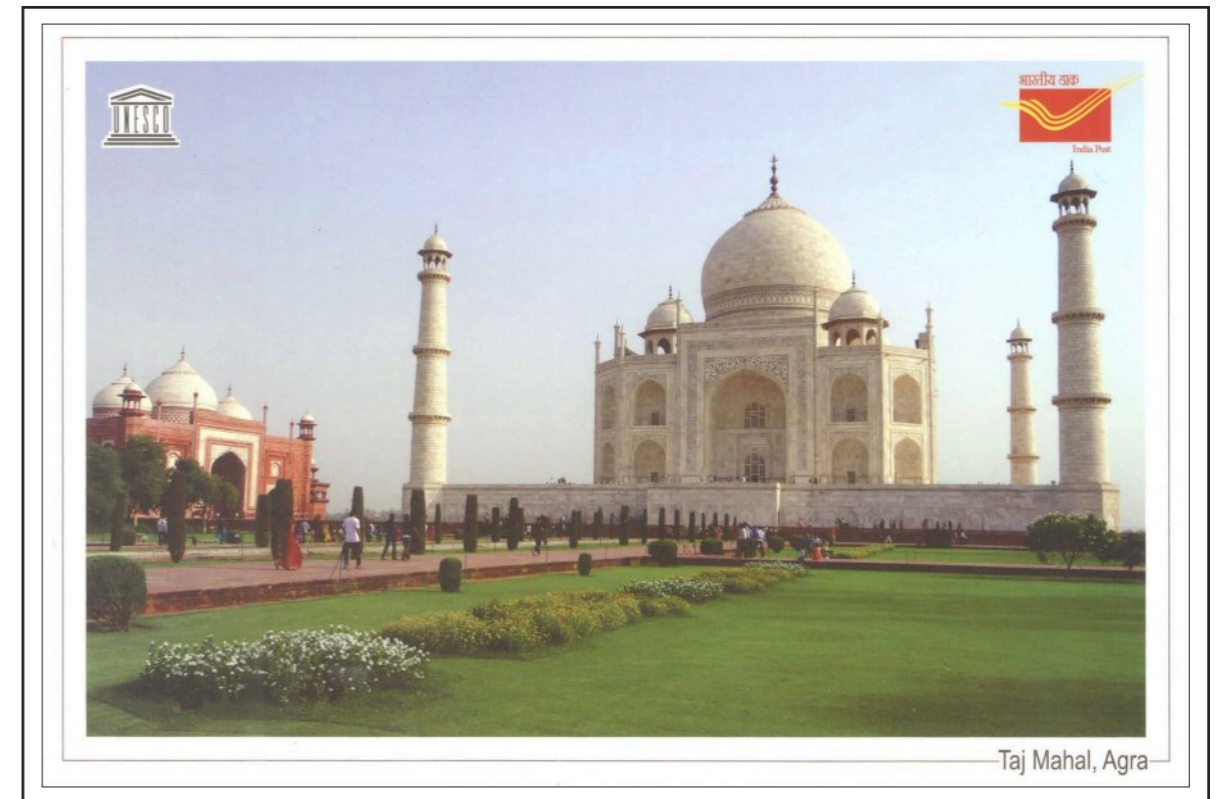
TAJ - A UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE OF INDIA

The Taj Mahal, located in Agra, India, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site designated in 1983 for its exceptional Mughal architecture and cultural significance. Built between 1631 and 1648 by Shah Jahan to honor his wife Mumtaz Mahal, this white marble masterpiece is a renowned symbol of love and a top global tourist destination.



Post card issued by India Post along with UNESCO commemorating the World UNESCO Heritage Site status of Taj Mahal.

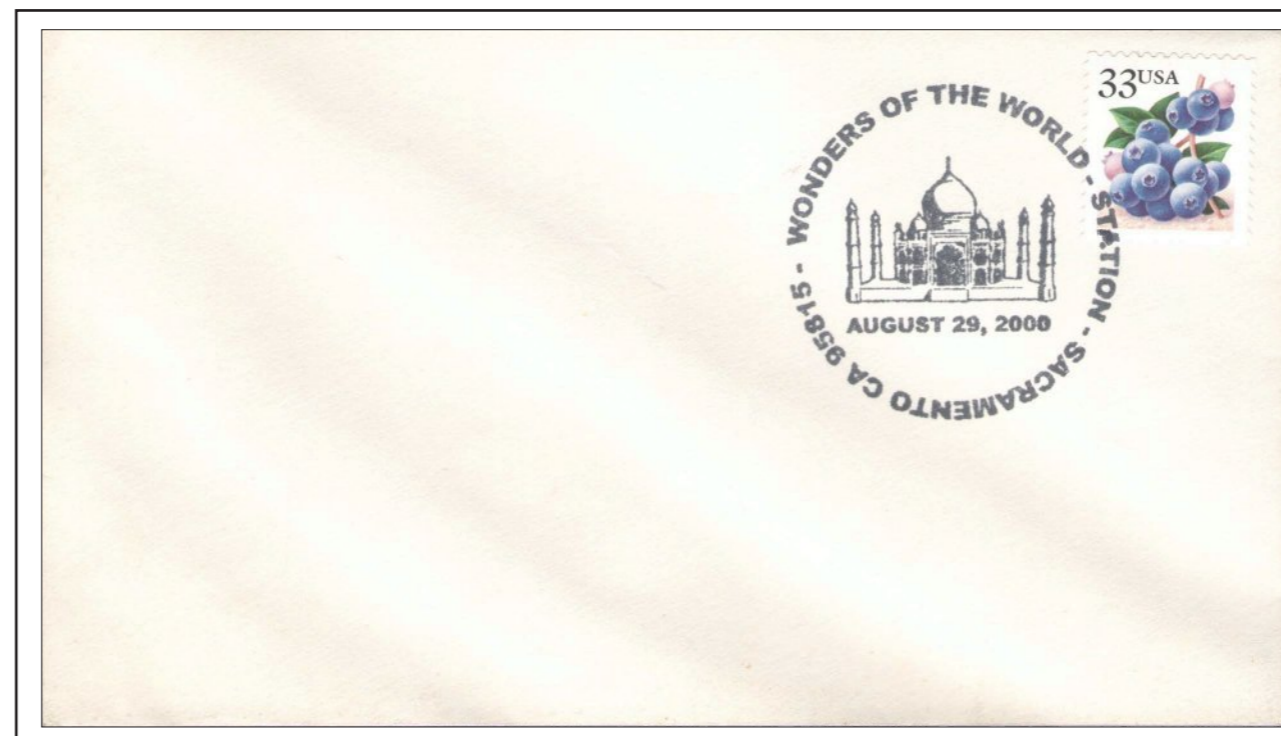
Taj Mahal, one of the Seven Wonders of the World is a mausoleum - a funerary mosque located in Agra. This much acclaimed master piece was built over a 16 year period from 1631 to 1648 by several thousand artisans under the guidance of an Imperial Committee. It was inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1983 as a cultural property/monument. It is set amidst vast Mughal Gardens, which cover 17 hectares of land on the right bank of the Yamuna River.



Post card issued by India Post along with UNESCO commemorating the World UNESCO Heritage Site status of Taj Mahal.

Key Aspects of the Taj Mahal World Heritage Site:

- **Significance:** It is deemed the finest example of Mughal architecture, blending Indian, Persian, and Islamic styles.
- **Key Features:** The complex includes the main white marble mausoleum, a mosque, a guest house, and formal gardens (Charbagh).
- **Protection:** As a UNESCO site, it receives protection under international treaties, with ongoing conservation efforts to manage risks like pollution.
- **Visitor Info:** It attracts millions annually, is closed on Fridays, and is best viewed at sunrise or sunset.



Cover with the special cancellation of Sacramento California showing Taj Mahal and cancellation indicating Taj Mahal as the WONDERS OF THE WORLD.

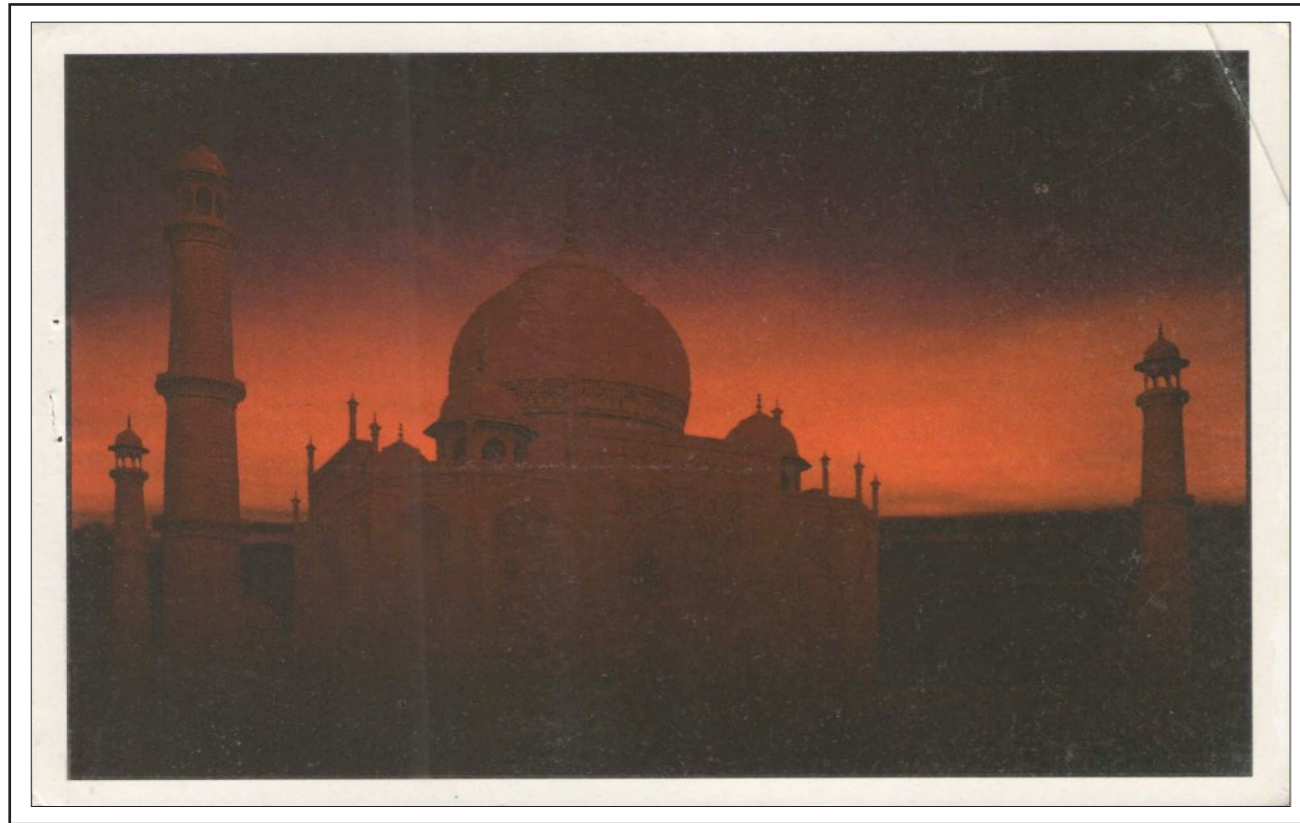


UNESCO video on Taj Mahal

VIEWING TAJ MAHAL

The Taj Mahal offers diverse views that change with the light and location, appearing pinkish at dawn, milky white in the afternoon, and golden under moonlight. Key perspectives include the main complex grounds, Mehtab Bagh for riverside sunset views, Agra Fort for a distant perspective, and the Yamuna River bank.

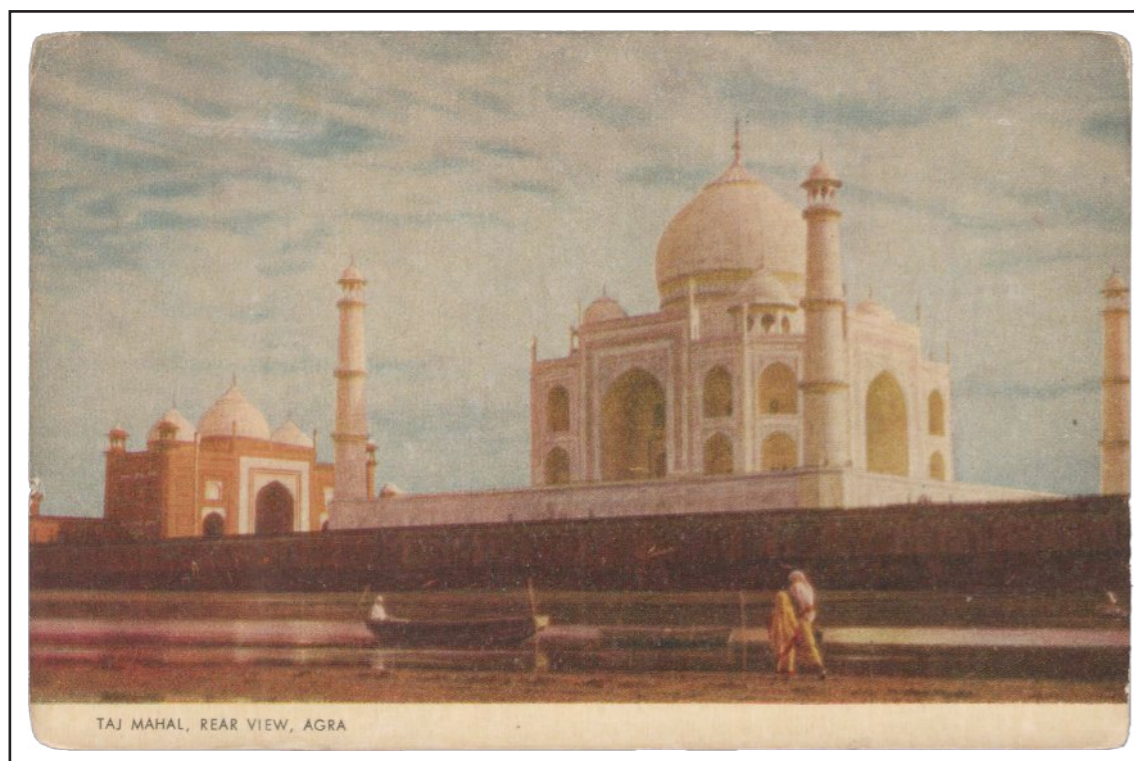
Sun Set View of Taj



Post card from an unknown publisher showing the sun set view of Taj Mahal

Watching the sunset at the Taj Mahal offers a romantic, golden-hued view of the marble monument as the sun dips behind the Yamuna River. The best viewpoints include the tranquil Mehtab Bagh gardens across the river, the Taj's own riverside gardens, or rooftop cafes in Agra.

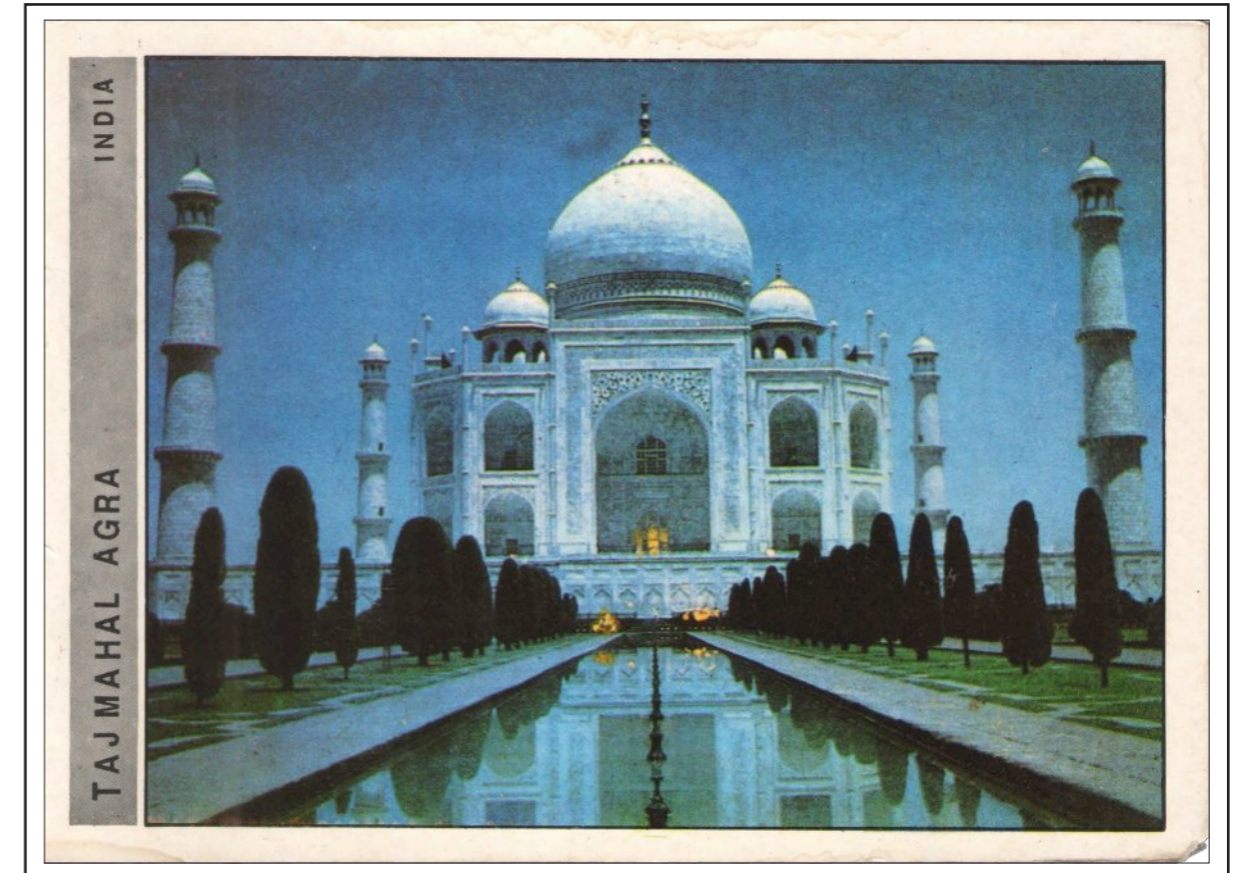
View of Taj from Yamuna River



Post card published by Indian Airlines Corporation showing the view of Taj Mahal from Yamuna River.

The rear view of the Taj Mahal is defined by its ivory-white marble facade overlooking the Yamuna River and is best experienced from the Mehtab Bagh gardens or through a boat ride on the river.

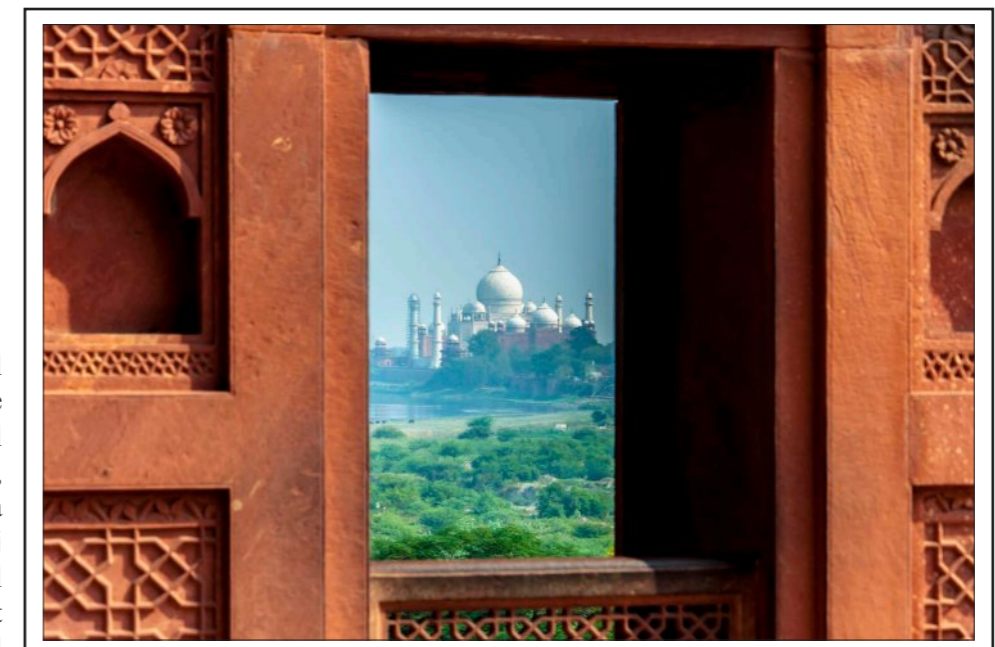
Moon Light View of Taj



Post card published by R. C. Jain showing the Moon Light view of Taj Mahal

The Taj Mahal moonlight view offers a magical experience, showcasing the white marble monument glowing under the full moon. The experience offers a serene, romantic, and unique glimpse of the Taj Mahal, often described as a “pearl” in the night sky.

View of Taj Mahal from Agra Fort



View of Taj Mahal from Agra Fort. The final days of Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, imprisoned in the Agra Fort, gazing at the Taj Mahal—the eternal symbol of love he built for Mumtaz Mahal

AN ETERNAL LEGACY

Eternal Legacy

Symbol of Love: Universally regarded as a monument to enduring devotion.

Cultural Icon: A New 7 Wonders of the World winner (2007) and a major tourist destination attracting millions annually.

Living Heritage: The surrounding city of Agra preserves Mughal-era traditions, such as pigeon flying and live music, which are directly linked to the monument's historical context.

Preservation: Recognized for its immense cultural value, it remains one of the most recognized landmarks in the world



Painting of Taj Mahal on Peacock Feathers by an Unknown Artist



Commemorative Cover dated 31 December 2018 showing the motif of Shah Jahan and Noor Jahan along with the stamp of Nur Jahan.

The Taj Mahal, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Agra, India, is an ivory-white marble mausoleum commissioned in 1632 by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan to honor his wife Mumtaz Mahal. Known as a “teardrop on the cheek of eternity,” it symbolizes eternal love and is a premier example of Mughal architecture.