

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:40  
ANSWERED ON:23.11.2005  
DEROGATORY DEPICTION OF HINDU RITUAL  
Singh Shri Mohan

**Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the Royal Postal Department of Britain has issued a Christmas postal stamp depicting a `Talak` mark on it as per the Hindu rituals;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Hindus living in Britain have expressed their resentment over the issue;
- (d) if so, the reaction of the Government of Britain thereto;
- (e) whether the Government of India is likely to issue instructions to High Commissions and Embassies to ensure that countries desist from resorting to such acts which may hurt religious feelings of the people; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (RAO INDERJIT SINGH)

(a&b) Yes, Sir. According to information available from the Royal Mail website, a set of 6 special Christmas postage stamps featuring the Madonna and Child, including one with Indian background, has been released recently. This 68 Pence stamp features an image of an Indian painting that dates back to 1620 AD according to the information on the website.

(c) According to available information, Mr. Ramesh Kalli Dai, Secretary-General of the Hindu Forum of Britain has criticized the image as being insensitive.

(d) We understand that the Royal Mail has since apologized for any unintentional offence caused to the Hindu community and agreed not to further print the said stamp, when current stock runs out. The existing stock of the said stamp will not be sold until specifically requested.

(e&f) Our Missions abroad monitor such situations closely and take action as appropriate, in bringing them to the notice of concerned authorities as may be necessary.