TWO DAY PROVISIONALS! WHEN JASDAN HAD NO STAMPS TO SELL The Reality of a Small State Post of India

Vivek S. Chopra, PhD
The London Philatelist, Vol. 135, No. 1535, May 2026, pp. 193–196

SYNOPSIS

Purpose and Importance

The philately of Jasdan State has traditionally been studied through its distinctive One Anna stamps—their printings, perforations, shades, papers, and plate varieties. Far less attention has been given to a more fundamental question: **how did this very small State postal system actually function, and were postage stamps always available at its village post offices?**

This article was written to address that question through the study of **three remarkable covers from Madhuka village dated 5–6 September 1943**. During a temporary shortage of adhesive stamps, the Madhuka postal official improvised by striking the regular postal cancellation handstamp on small pieces of paper and affixing these to letters **in place of postage stamps**. These surviving covers provide tangible evidence of a previously little-understood aspect of Jasdan postal history: the practical difficulties of maintaining postal service in a small, recently organized and highly centralized State post.

Why the Discovery Matters

Jasdan's regular **Darbari Tapal** was formally organized only in 1942. Stamp production was extremely limited, distribution was centralized, and village offices depended upon supplies routed from Jasdan headquarters. Contemporary records show small print runs and strict monthly accounting for stamps issued and remaining in village groups, creating circumstances in which even a minor delay in replenishment could leave an outlying office without adhesives.

The Madhuka covers provide the physical evidence for this administrative reality. Two were prepared on **Sunday, 5 September 1943 and dispatched Monday, 6 September**, Madhuka's regular outward-mail day; a third was written and dispatched on September 6. Significantly, contemporary mail from the larger **Vinchhiya post office on September 5 bears normal adhesive postage**, demonstrating that stamps remained available elsewhere in Jasdan. The shortage was therefore **localized rather than statewide**, and the Madhuka provisionals appear to represent a brief emergency tactics created at village level to keep the mail moving.

Contribution to Jasdan Philately

The importance of these covers extends beyond the discovery of an unusual provisional. They provide a rare window into the **day-to-day operation of a small Indian Princely State post** and help explain why genuinely used Jasdan postal history is considerably scarcer than surviving mint stamps.

The study also places Jasdan's stamps in their proper operational context. Limited print runs, centralized distribution, village dependency, dealer demand, and wartime production and transportation constraints could all affect the availability of stamps at the postal counter. The Madhuka provisionals demonstrate the resourcefulness of local postal officials when that system temporarily failed to supply the most basic requirement—postage stamps.

Rather than viewing Jasdan solely through its catalogued stamp varieties, this article demonstrates the value of studying **covers, postal regulations, routes, dispatch schedules, and contemporary administrative records together**.