

Remembering Mahatma with stamps, notes, coins



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Did you know that India commemorated Mahatma Gandhi's return from South Africa in 1915, a century later in 2015, with, among other things, two coins, each of 10 rupee and 100 rupee denominations? Did you know that, after independence, it was proposed to replace the King's portrait on the currency notes with that of Gandhi, a specimen five-rupee note with Mahatma Gandhi on the obverse, was printed but not approved and never released?

Find more such fascinating details in "Global Collectibles of Mahatma Gandhi through Bank Notes, Coins and Stamps" to be launched today (October 2). Edited and published by Sushilkumar Agrawal of Mintage World, an online museum, the book is a unique archive on commemorative coins, stamps and banknotes on Gandhi released by 144 countries across the world. Also, there are miniature and souvenir sheets released on the Mahatma, depicting various stages in his life. The descriptions also carry the year and pur-



Gandhi at the charkha; on currency notes; and 100 years of his return

pose of the commemorative issues. To us Indians, it is a matter of pride that our Father of the Nation has been honoured with collectibles across the globe, from India to Argentina, Cameroon to Comoros, Mauritius to Monaco and Venezuela to Vietnam.

The collection could not have come at a better time. We have just celebrated Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav, the 75 years of our independence, and the Mahatma's yet another birth anniversary is here. "When we started working on it, we didn't expect its release on 75 years of Independence or on Gandhi Jayanti. It is just a co-

incidence that the collection has come at this time," said Agrawal who is fond of collecting coins, banknotes and stamps.

Apart from creating awareness among people about how the world has commemorated Bapu over the years, explained Agrawal, the aim is also to bring people back to the hobbies of collecting coins, stamps and banknotes. "The addiction with social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter have robbed many of us of the fascinating habits like collecting coins, banknotes and stamps. I want people to re-

discover the charming world of collecting memorabilia," he said.

It informs us that the first banknote featuring Gandhi was a 500-rupee note printed in October 1987. And we are also told that once a ten-rupee note with Gandhi's portrait on the obverse was printed but never approved and not released. All the major milestones in Gandhi's life and the life of our republic, Champaran and Dandi Satyagraha, India's 50th Independence anniversary, 50th anniversary of the Quit India Movement, have been commemorated with stamps featuring the Mahatma. Many stamps commemorate Gandhi's satyagraha in South Africa, including one depicting the humiliating incident of Gandhi being thrown on a railway platform.

"This is a monumental work since the new generation is forgetting that Mahatma Gandhi played such a big role in our freedom movement. The document should not only inspire researchers and scholars but young readers too to understand how the world sees Gandhi who is a global figure," said Sanjiv Nigam, director, Mahatma Gandhi-founded Hindustani Prachar Sabha in Mumbai.