

METER STAMPS OF INDIA (1922 - 2025)

WHAT IS A METER STAMP ?

The Postage Meter is a government licensed mailing machine that prints postage as required, directly on the envelope, post card or inland letters for any type of mail - regular, registered, overseas surface mail or airmails. In a simple operation, it prints a prepaid postage meter stamp, including dated postmark, of any value needed. The meter stamps is non-negotiable, and requires no cancellation in most countries. It can be used only by the licensed user whose assigned meter number appears in the meter stamp itself. The meter does its own book keeping through sealed but visible registers, which show postage used and postage on hand. The meter printing machine contains the postage printing die and the recording mechanism. Meter Stamps are printed directly on to the envelope and are usually dated for the day of use.

AIM & SCOPE

Five makers of Mechanical Franking Machines were used from 1922 to 1947 under the British India rule and many different Franking Machine models were used Post Independence. This exhibit makes an attempt to showcase the Meter Franking from these machines used both in British India and Post Independence India. This exhibit showcases the meter franking for the Domestic Mails, Overseas Surface Mails and Overseas Air Mails. Only one typical items from each machines is showcased in this exhibit to complete the story of the Meter Franking machines used in India.

STRUCTURE OF THE EXHIBIT

This exhibit is in three sections and each section depicts cover from one meter franking machine type. The sections are arranged chronologically depending the issue of the meter franking machines. In many cases we have observed the overlapping usage of two different machines. However, this fact is ignored while preparing the exhibit.

Much of the detailed information pertaining to the meters is on the bases of personal research. Rate and routes of the covers are explained wherever it is known. *The explanation of the Meters Stamps are given in Red Italics* font and the general information regarding the postal artifact is given in Black Italics font.

REFERENCES MADE FROM

1. Meter Stamps of the Indian Sub-Continent 1965 Ed. by John C Mann.
2. The International Postage Meter Stamp Catalogue by J.A Hawking & Richard Stambaugh.
3. What is a Postage Meter ? Article in Collector's Guide - A Journal of The Meter Stamps Society Spring 2016.
4. Indian Meter Markings by Rajesh Pamnani
5. The Franking Machine Posts of British India by Ernest G Oehme
6. Indian Postal Meter Markings - Exhibit by Dr. R. S. Gandhi
7. Stamps of India 3rd Ed. by Jal Cooper

INTRODUCTION

The earliest record of a franking machine was by Frenchman Carle Bushe who in 1884 obtained a British Patent for a device that would print a stamp on an envelope and record postage via a counting device. However, Bushe's device is not known to have existed, and the idea was not pursued. The first franking machine known to have been placed into use was a coin operated machine invented by Charles A. Kahrs. It was installed in the lobby of the General Post Office in Christiana, Norway, on August 24, 1900, but was removed in December that same year Postage Meter. Madrid UPU Congress held in 1920 approved their use on International Mails effective from 1st January 1922. In fact, India is the first country in Asia to use Meter Franking on their posts.

PLAN OF THE EXHIBIT

SI No.	Description	Page Nos.
1.0	Pre Independence Meter Franking Machines	2
1.1	Universal NZ FV6	2
1.2	Neopost FV 2,3 or 6	2
1.3	Neopost LV 6	2
1.4	Universal Multi-Value MV	2
2.0	Post Independence Franking Machines	3 - 6
2.1	Neopost LV 6/8 (Anna Value)	3
2.2	Neopost LV 6/8 (Rupee Value)	3
2.3	Universal Multi-Value (Anna Value)	3
2.4	Universal Multi-Value (Rupee Value)	3
2.5	Simplex LV 25 (Anna Value)	4
2.6	Simplex LV 25 (Rupee Value)	4
2.7	Roneo-Neopost Frankmaster LV	4
2.8	Stampmaster LV 16	4
2.9	Automax MV 16	5
2.10	Kilburn MV (1970)	5
2.11	Kilburn MV (1982)	5
2.12	Armcess (Postalia MV)	5
2.13	Republic Engineering "Reco" LV 16	6
2.14	Refugee Relief Meter Franks	6
3.0	Electronic & Remotely Managed Franking Machines	7 - 8
3.1	Pitney Bowes "5300" MV	7
3.2	Hasler Mailmaster MV	7
3.3	Neopost "Electronic" MV	7
3.4	Pitney Bowes A900/B900 MV	7
3.5	Remotely Managed Franking Machines	8

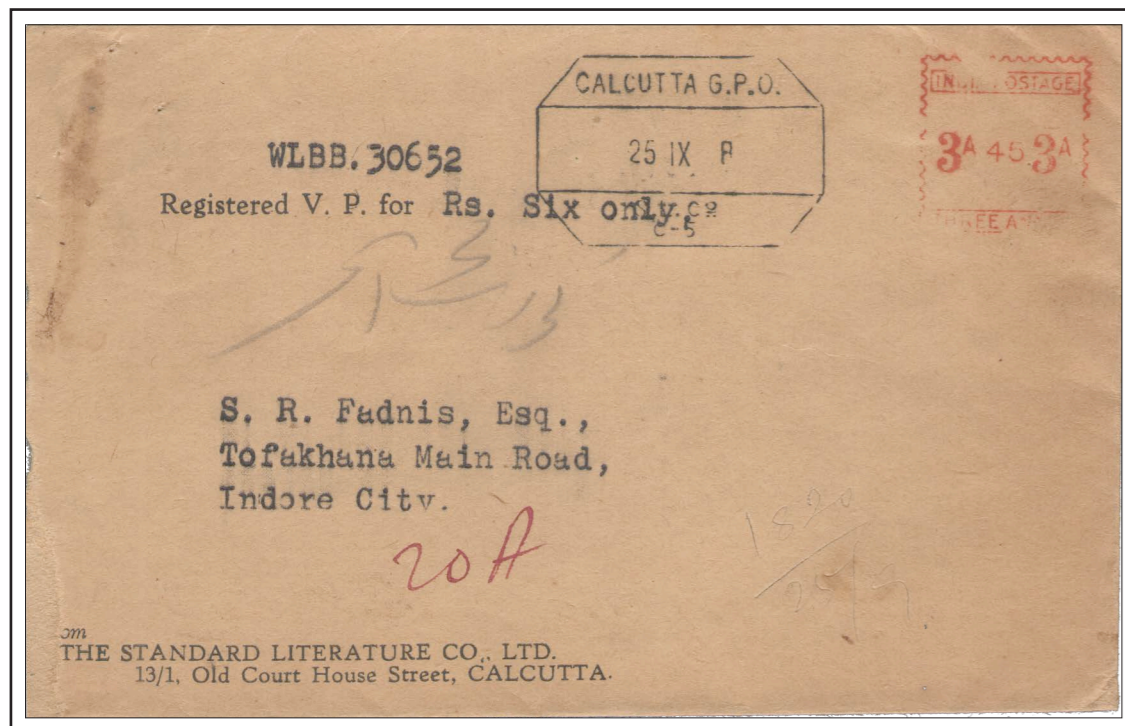
1.0 PRE INDEPENDENCE FRANKING MACHINES

1.1 UNIVERSAL NZ (FV. 6)

1922 - 1935

M/s Universal Postal Frankers Ltd., England made their first model Universal NZ in 1922 which was permitted for use in India vide D G Special Circular No. 60 dated 29th January 1924.

Approximately 56 machines were supplied to India and this had the capacity to impress six denominations (FV. 6) viz., ½ a, 1 a, 2 a, 3 a, 4 a & 8 a and were fitted with three types of town marks all in hexagon. All the three types of town marks were simultaneously used in Bombay, Calcutta, Cawnpore, Jamshedpur, Lahore and Madras.



Registered VP Cover with Universal NZ FV 6 Frank with Machine No. 6 of the sender The Standard Literature Co. Ltd., Calcutta with Town Mark of Calcutta G. P. O. and 3As Meter Frank.

Cover sent from Calcutta to Indore City, on 25th September 1928 with 3 As postage paid.

1.2 NEOPOST (FV. 2, 3 OR 6)

1922 - 1992

Neopost Franking Machines were imported from Germany. Its main feature was the combination of date post mark (town mark). The frank featured the Crown and the monogram GRI (Georgius Rex Indica meaning King George of India) along with value.



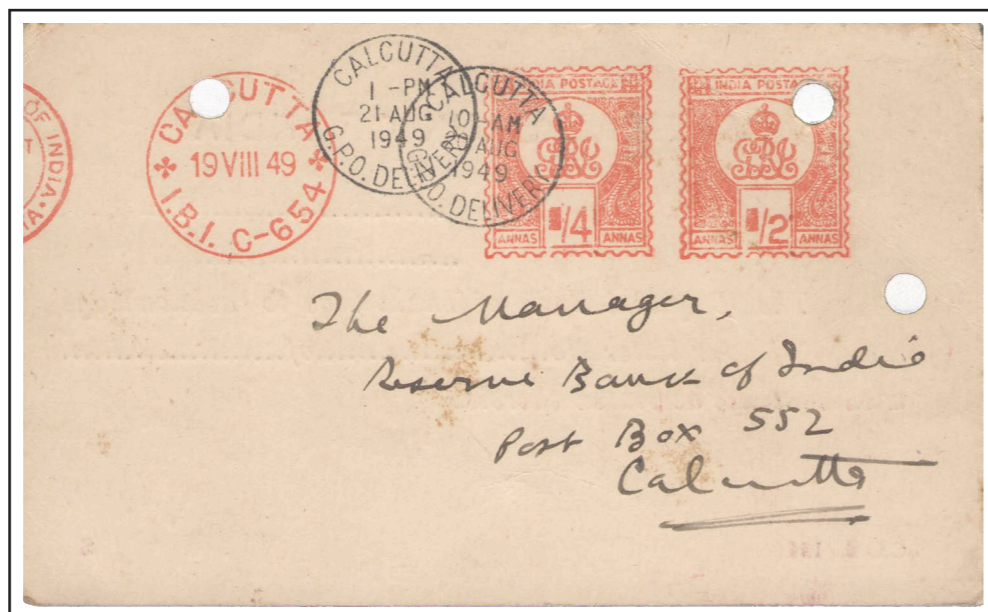
Cover with Neopost FV2, 3 or 6 Frank with License No. C-570 of the sender Bharat Airways Ltd., Town Mark of Calcutta and ¾A Meter Frank.

Cover sent from Bombay to Karaikudi, on 3 January 1951 with ¾ Anna postage paid.

1.3 NEOPOST (LV. 6)

1932 - 1954

Design of the die is the same as for the 1928 FV Machines except that the bottom line of the frame is broken on two places, the centre part forming part of the value segment. The part of the frame on the centre part is usually thicker than that on the two side parts. Town mark either Double Circle, Broken Inner Circle or Single Circle with rosette ornaments. Figures of value normally with out serifs. A large "R" was added in Rupee die on either side to aid identification.



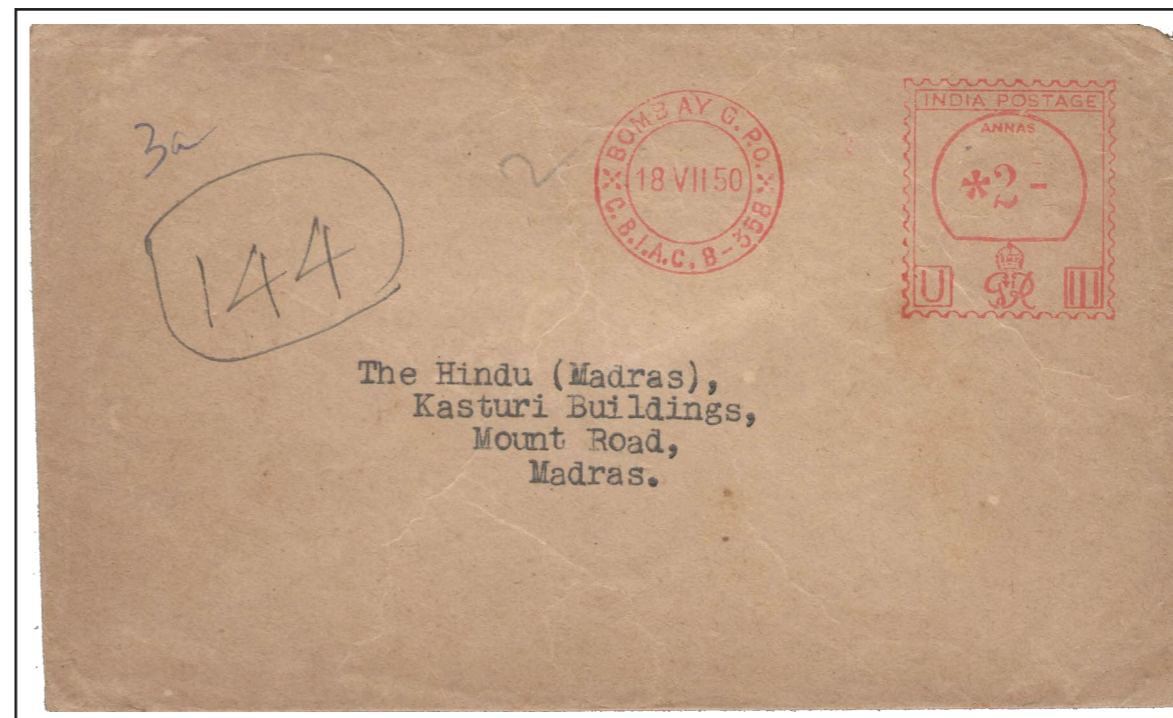
Postcard with Neopost FV 6 Frank with License No. C-654 of the sender Imperial Bank of India, Calcutta and Single Circle Town Mark of Calcutta and ¼A & ½ A Meter Franks.

Postcard sent locally at Calcutta on 19 August 1949 with ¾ Anna postage paid.

1.4 UNIVERSAL MULTI-VALUE (MV)

1946 - 1954

Originally developed from German Francotyp machines by Universal Postal Frankers in 1932. Original dies with Crown and "GviR" cypher at bottom of the die. Numbered from U1 upwards. Town mark in Double Circle usually with rosette ornaments, slogan on the left of the Town Mark.



Cover with Universal Multi-Value MV Frank with License No. B-358 of the sender The Chartered Bank, Bombay and Double Circle Town Mark of Bombay G. P. O. and 2As Meter Frank.

Cover sent from Bombay to Madras on 18 July 1950 with 2 Annas postage paid.

2.0 POST INDEPENDENCE FRANKING MACHINES

2.1 NEOPOST LV 6/8 (ANNA VALUE)

1949 - 1959

After Independence, Crown and "GRI / G vi R" Royal insignia was replaced by new national symbol the ASHOKA CHAKRA. The new design dies showing the Wheel of Ashoka along with Town mark either in Double Circle (DC), or in Single Circle (SC) or in Broken Inner Circle (BIC) with rosette ornaments at sides.



Postcard with Neopost LV 6/8 ANNA value Frank with License No. M-312 of the sender Dalal & Co. Madras with Single Circle Town Mark of Madras G. P. O. and 3/4 As Meter Frank.

Postcard sent from Madras to Karaikudi, on 29 August 1952 with 3/4 As postage paid.

2.3 UNIVERSAL MULTI-VALUE (ANNA VALUE)

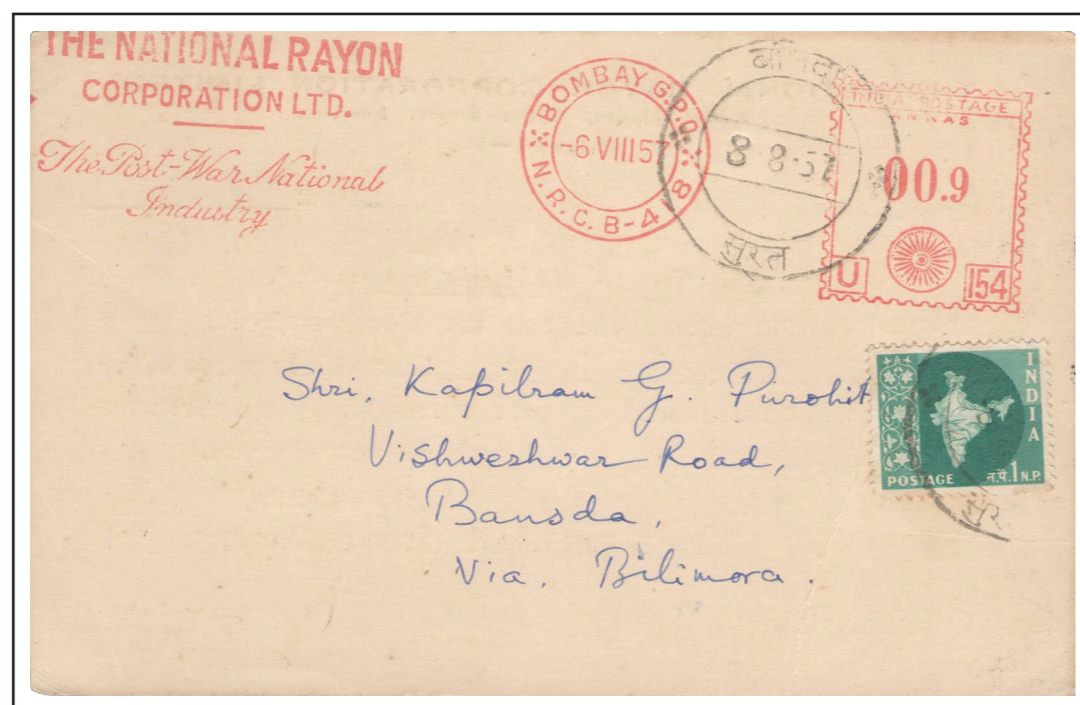
1949 - 1959

Universal Multi-Value Model Meter Markings has New Republican design die numbered U 1 upwards. Large frank with Wheel of Ashoka at bottom between the prefix and meter number with ANNAS beneath the top panel under "INDIA POSTAGE". Double Circle (DC) Town Mark observed accompanying the Meter Marking.

Postcard with Universal Multi-Value Anna Frank with Die No. U-154 and License No. B-418 of the sender The National Rayon Corporation Limited, Bombay with Double Circle Town Mark of Bombay G. P. O. and 00.9 As Meter Frank in 00.0 format.

Postcard sent from Bombay to Bansda, Bilimora, on 6 August 1957 with 1 NP and 0.9 As postage paid.

Postcard shows the combination method of paying the postage using both stamps and Meter franking.



2.2 NEOPOST LV 6/8 (RUPEE VALUE)

1957 - 1984

New Currency dies from 1 April 1957 was introduced to coincide with the change of currency from Rupee, Anna, Pies to Naya Paise and Rupee. Either Single Circle or Double Circle or Broken Inner Circle Town Mark observed along with the Meter Frank. Figures of Value expressed as decimal fractions of a Rupee.

Postcard with Neopost LV 6/8 RUPEE value Frank with License No. A-165 of the sender Swadeshi Cloth Dealers Ltd., Kanpur with Single Circle Town Mark of Kanpur and 0.15 R Meter Frank.

Postcard sent from Kanpur to Hansi, Punjab, on 31 August 1965 with 0.15 R postage paid.



2.4 UNIVERSAL MULTI-VALUE (RUPEE VALUE)

1957 - 1985

Universal Multi-Value Model Meter Markings with new currency dies from 1 April 1957. RUPEES at top with Double Circle Town Mark with usual rosette ornaments as in the Annas Value Franks. Seen only with Double Circle Town Marks in different minor variations.

Book-Post Letter with Universal Multi-Value Rupee Frank with License No. B-1402 of the sender Voltas, Bombay with Double Circle Town Mark of Bombay and 0.10 R Meter Frank in 0.00 format.

Book-Post Letter sent from Bombay to Ladnu, Rajasthan, on 18 January 1967 with 0.10 Rupees postage paid.



2.0 POST INDEPENDENCE FRANKING MACHINES

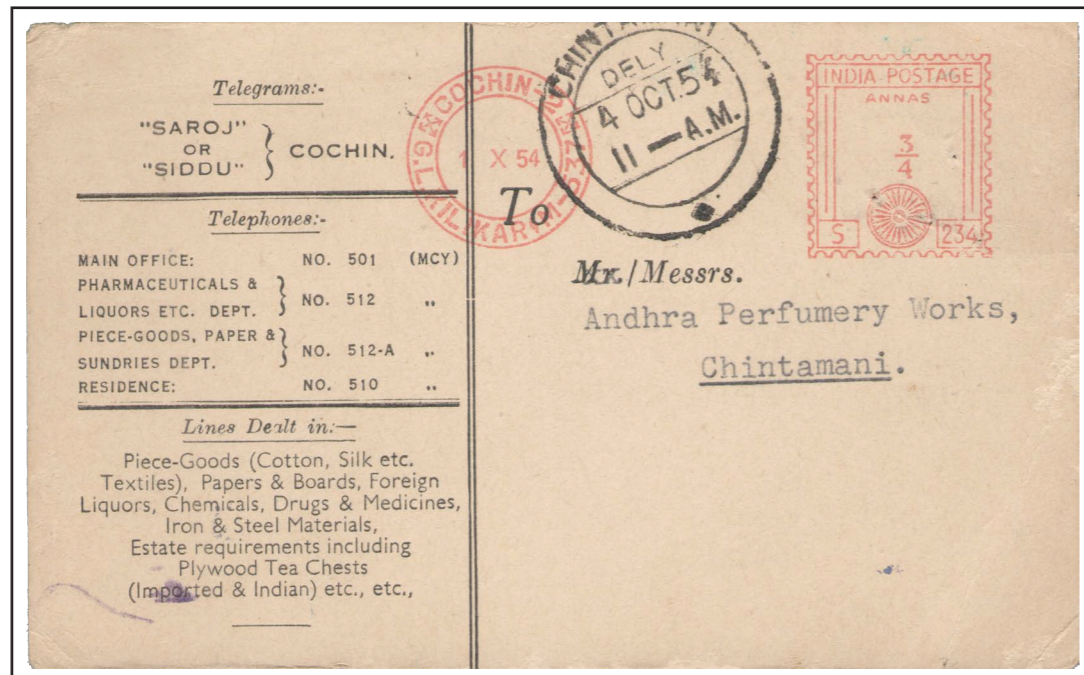
2.5 SIMPLEX LV 25 (ANNA VALUES)

1951 - 1958

Simplex Limited Value (LV) 25 machine was developed as a simpler alternative to Multi-Value machine by Universal Postal Frankers of Great Britain. The design remains the same except that the "S" appears in the box on the left hand corner. The Design of the die is revised. Numbered from S2 upwards along with Double Circle Townmark.

Postcard with Simplex LV 25 ANNA value Frank with Die No. S-234 and License No. M-537 of the sender G. L. Kilkar, Cochin with Double Circle Town Mark of Cochin and 3/4 A Meter Frank.

Postcard sent from Cochin to Chintamani, on 1 October 1954 with 3/4 A postage paid.



2.7 RONEO-NEOPOST FRANKMASTER LV

1957 - 1984

Roneo-Neopost (RN) Frankmaster Limited Value (LV) first machine (Model 305) was introduced in Great Britain in 1955. Index letter RN at left and either solid block or numbered 1 upwards at right bottom corners. RUPEES at top, license die Single Circle, Double Circle or Broken Inner Circle townmark with rosette ornaments. Optional slogan at left.



Cover with Roneo-Neopost Frankmaster LV Frank with Die No. RM-183 and License No. D-478 of the sender United India Insurance Co. Ltd., New Delhi with Double Circle Town Mark of New Delhi and .35 Rupees Meter Frank.

Cover sent from New Delhi on 2 April 1981 with 35 paise postage paid.

2.6 SIMPLEX LV 25 (RUPEES VALUES)

1957 - 1980

Simplex Limited Value (LV) 25 machine was developed as a simpler alternative to Multi-Value machine by Universal Postal Frankers of Great Britain. The design remains the same except that the "S" appears in the box on the left hand corner. The Design of the die is revised. New currency dies from 1 April 1957. "RUPEES" at top.



Cover with Simplex LV 25 RUPEE value Frank with Die No. S-253 and License No. M-542 of the sender Sri Rangavilas Mills Ltd., Coimbatore with Double Circle Town Mark of Peelamedu P. O. and 0.20R Meter Frank.

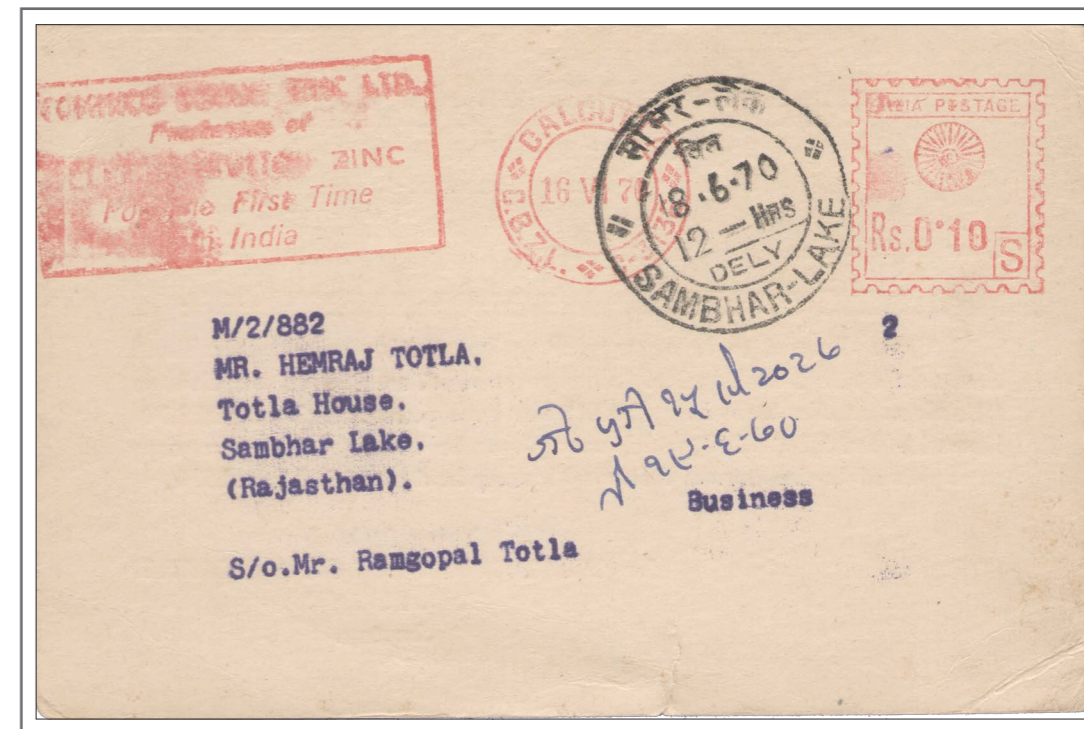
Cover sent from Peelamedu, Coimbatore to Bombay on 15 December 1971 with 0.25 Rupees postage paid.

Cover shows the combination method of paying the postage using both stamps and Meter franking.

2.8 STAMPMASTER LV 16

1957 - 1994

Stampmaster (LV 16) Model Meter Marking was developed and patented by Mr. C. M. Smith and manufactured in India by M/s Republic Engineering Corporation, Calcutta for the agent. The Meter has "Rs." at left before the value. "S", "R" or "P" in a rectangle at the bottom right. Frank frame dies are listed below. Date figures are with or without serifs. Townmark is either Single Circle, Double Circle or Double Circle with Double Inner circle.



Postcard with Stampmaster LV 16 "S" Frank with License No. C-3136 of the sender Cominco Binani Zinc Limited, Calcutta with Double Circle Town Mark of Calcutta and 0.10 Rupees Meter Frank.

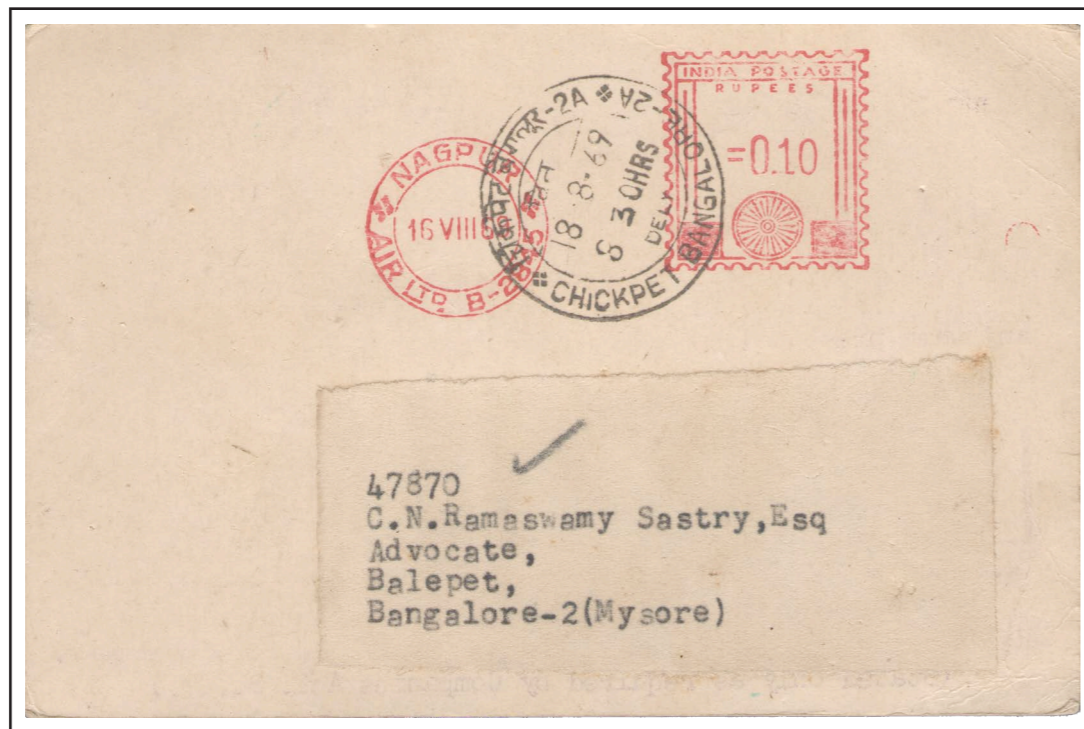
Postcard sent from Calcutta to Sambhar Lake on 16 June 1970 with 10 paise postage paid.

2.0 POST INDEPENDENCE FRANKING MACHINES

2.9 AUTOMAX MV 6

1961 - 1986

Universal Automax MV Model of 1961 of Meter Franking was designed as a replacement of Universal MV Model and introduced in Great Britain by Universal Postal Frankers in 1959, in three models with varying denominations. "RUPEE" at top. No initial letter or number in die, but two solid blocks at bottom right and left. Figures of value is preceded by an (kind of) equal sign with Ashoka Wheel between the two solid blocks at bottom and INDIA POSTAGE at the top.



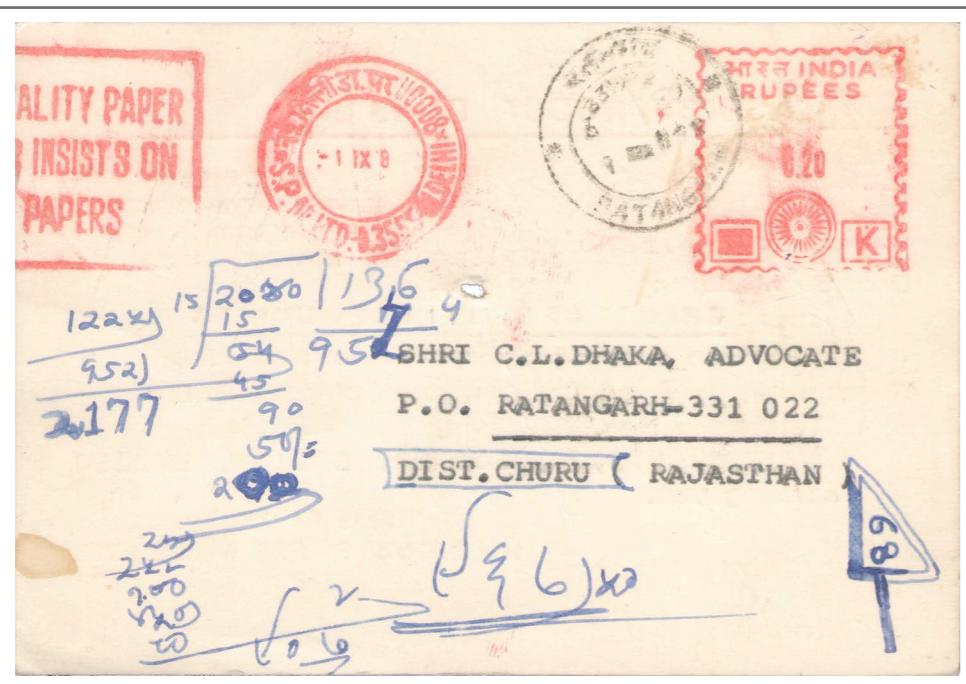
Postcard with Automax MV 6 Frank with License No. B-2845 of the sender All India Reporter Ltd., Nagpur with Double Circle Town Mark of Nagpur and 0.10 Rupees Meter Frank.

Postcard sent from Nagpur to Bangalore on 16 August 1969 with 10 paise postage paid.

2.11 KILBURN MV

1982 - 1999

M/s Macneill & Magor Ltd., Calcutta manufactured and marketed their models (MV version K, 25 and MV models K 99, K 999, K 9999). Frank with panels at left and right each containing a vertical wavy line frame with "RUPEES" beneath the country name (which is in English and Devanagari) at top. Unengraved block at lower left and boxed "K" at lower right with Wheel of Ashoka between at the bottom. Town Mark either with Single Circle, Double Circle or Double Circle with PIN.



Cover with Kilburn MV Frank with License No. D-3555 of the sender Saraf Paper Mills Ltd., New Delhi with Double Circle Town Mark of New Delhi and 0.20 Rupees Meter Frank.

Cover sent from New Delhi to Ratangarh, Rajasthan on 1 September 1980 with 20 paise postage paid.

2.10 KILBURN MV

1970 - 1995

M/s Macneill & Magor Ltd., Calcutta manufactured and marketed their own four models (FV version K, 25 and MV models K 99, K 999, K 9999). The meter impression from the first three models are indistinguishable. Frank with panels at left and right each containing a single vertical line with unengraved block at lower left and large "K" at the lower right. Town Mark either with Single Circle, Double Circle or Double Circle with PIN.



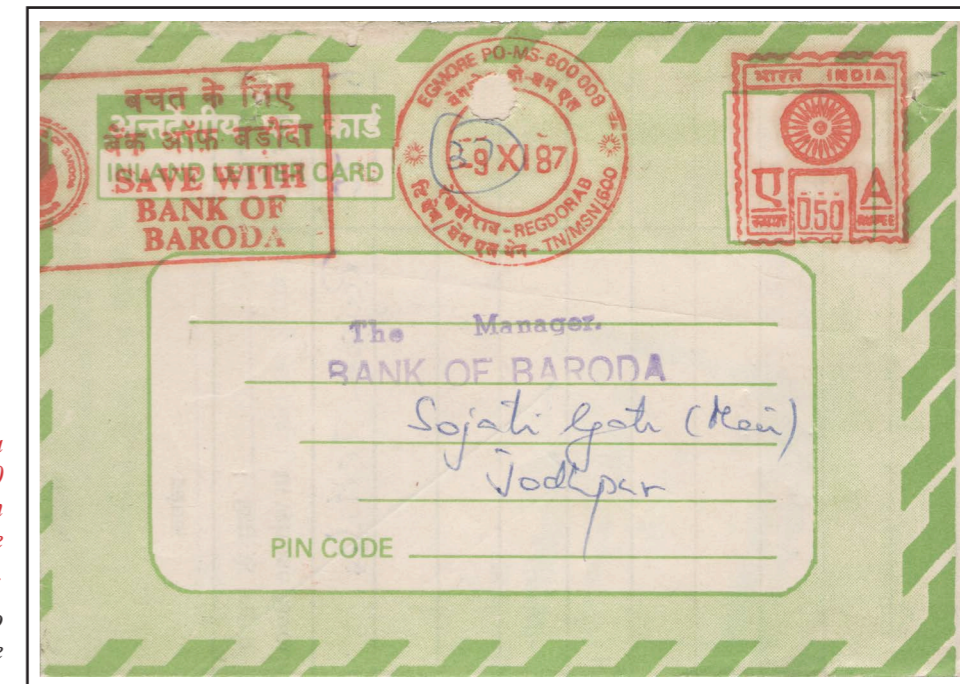
Registered Cover with Kilburn MV Frank with no License No. of the sender Super Saroj Silk Mills, Udhna, Surat with Double Circle Town Mark of Surat City and 2.85 Rupees Meter Frank.

Registered Cover sent from Udhna, Surat to Ratangarh, Rajasthan with 2 Rupees 85 paise postage paid.

2.12 ARMCESS (POSTALIA MV)

1982 - 1992

Manufactured by M/s Armcess Engineers Pvt. Ltd., Madras and marketed by M/s Postalia Inter Franker Pvt Ltd. Design of indicium similar to that of Neopost Limited Value of 1957 and style of legend. With Large "A" above "RUPEE" at lower right and large "ए" above Devanagari text at lower left. भारत INDIA at top and at the middle above the value tablet is the Ashoka Wheel. The Frank has a wavy outer frame with straight line inner frame. Seen with large Town Marks either Double Circle or Triple Circle.



Inland Letter Card with Armcess (Postalia MV) Frank with License No. TN/MSN/600 of the sender Bank of Baroda, Madras with Large Double Circle Town Mark of Egmore P.O. Madras and 0.50 Rupee Meter Frank.

Inland Letter Card sent from Madras to Jodhpur on 9 November 1987 with 50 paise postage paid.

2.0 POST INDEPENDENCE FRANKING MACHINES

2.13 REPUBLIC ENGINEERING "RECO" LV 16

1982 - 1996

Similar to Stampmaster LV 16 Model Meter Franking but with Devanagari characters above and within box at lower left and Rs. above boxed R at lower right.



Cover with Republic Engineering "Reco" LV 16 Frank with License No. HDC-118 of the sender Nagarjuna Signode Ltd., Hyderabad with Double Circle Town Mark of Hyderabad and 0.50 Rupees Meter Frank.

Cover sent from Hyderabad on 4 February 1984 with 50 paise postage paid.



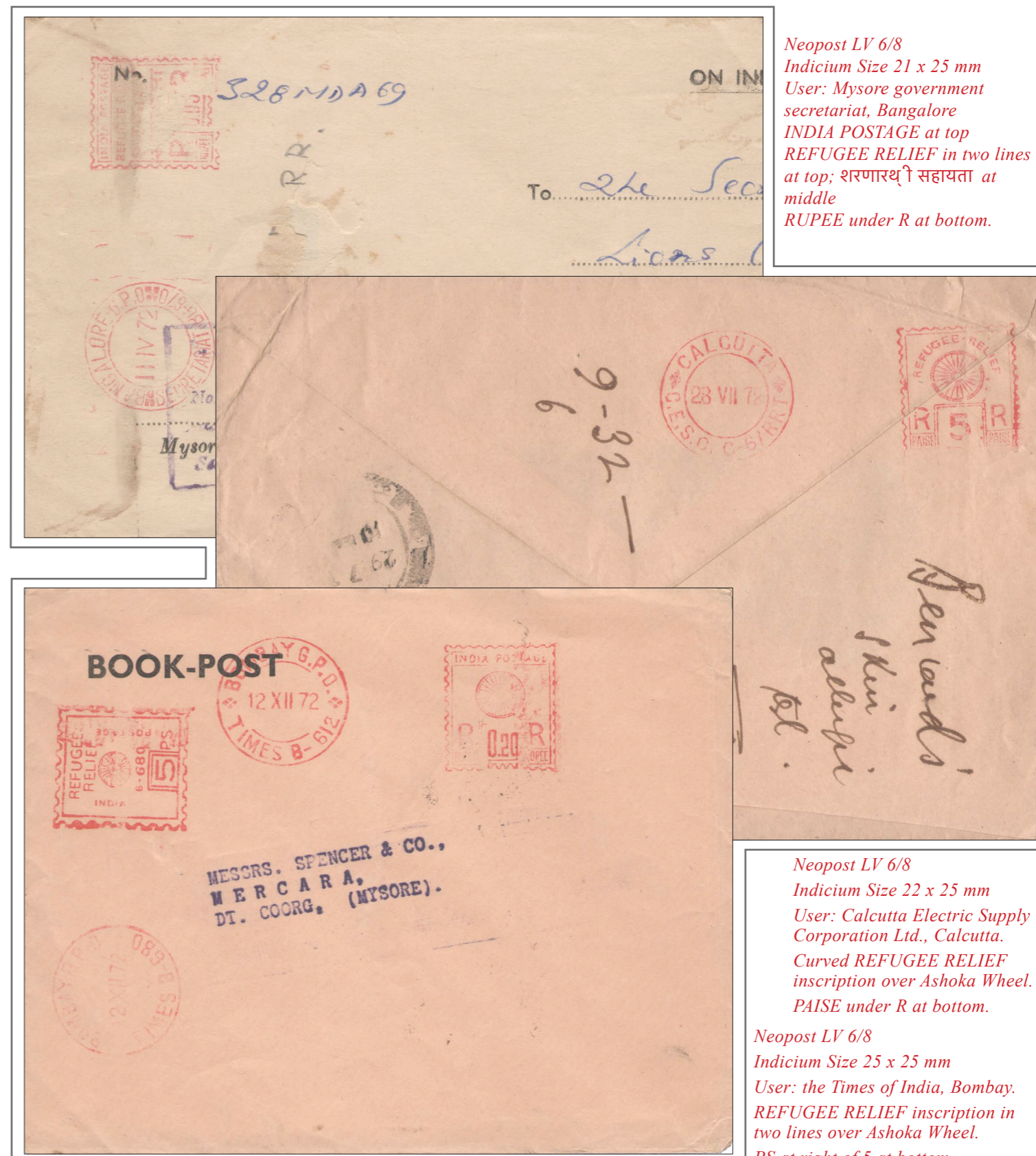
Cover with Republic Engineering "Reco" LV 16 Frank with License No. TN/ MSN/612 of the sender Town Planning Works Department, Madras with Double Circle Town Mark of Madras and 1.00 Rupees Meter Frank.

Cover sent locally in Madras on 17 August 1994 with 1 Rupee postage paid.

2.14 REFUGEE RELIEF METER FRANKS

1971 - 1973

Obligatory Refugee Relief Tax was levied from 15th November 1971 to 31st April 1973 by an Act through postal system though it was not made compulsory for all postal articles except a few. Numerous variations in Refugee Relief Tax Meter Franks resulted in absence of clear-cut and well defined guidelines from P & T Directorate on matter of design and inscription or having some identifying features for its special use. Nine different types on four machine models have been known so far, five distinct type sets alone were used on Neopost Machines.



Neopost LV 6/8
Indicium Size 21 x 25 mm
User: Mysore government secretariat, Bangalore
INDIA POSTAGE at top
REFUGEE RELIEF in two lines at top; शरणार्थी सहायता at middle
RUPEE under R at bottom.

Neopost LV 6/8
Indicium Size 22 x 25 mm
User: Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation Ltd., Calcutta.
Curved REFUGEE RELIEF inscription over Ashoka Wheel.
PAISE under R at bottom.

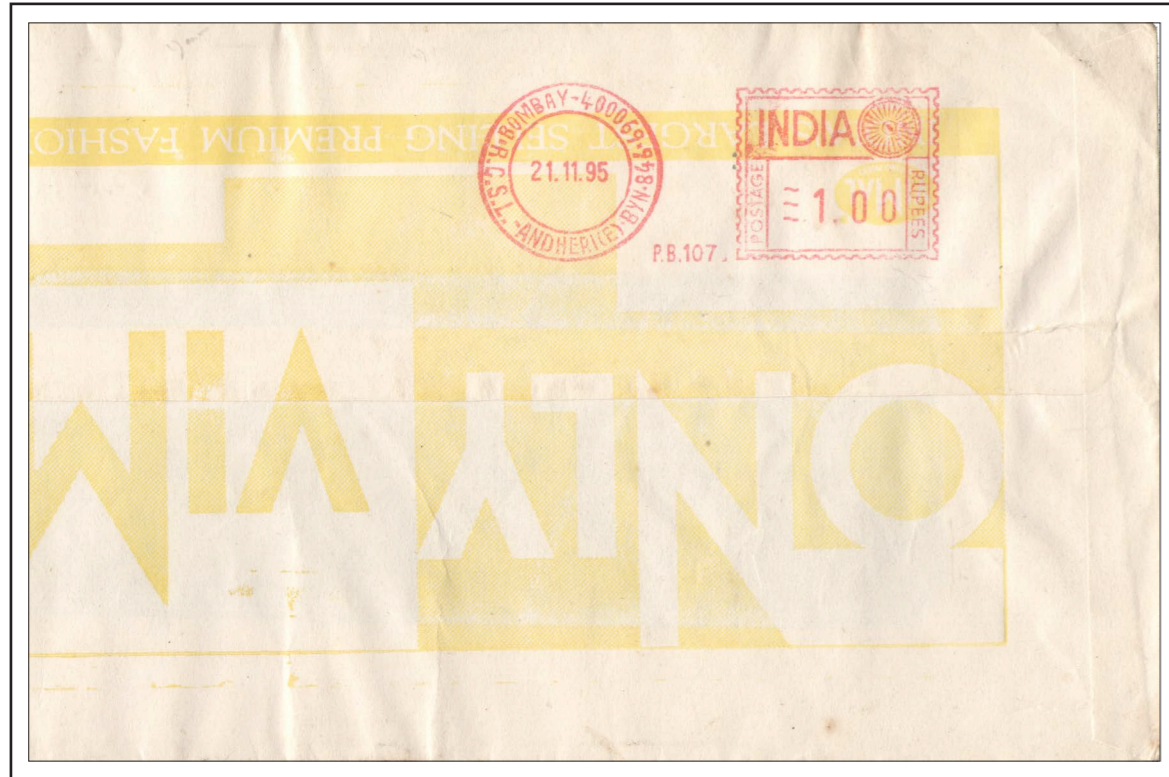
Neopost LV 6/8
Indicium Size 25 x 25 mm
User: the Times of India, Bombay.
REFUGEE RELIEF inscription in two lines over Ashoka Wheel.
PS at right of 5 at bottom.

3.0 ELECTRONIC & REMOTELY MANAGED FRANKING MACHINES

3.1 PITNEY BOWES "5300" MV

1980 - 1997

Pitney Bowes "5300" is a horizontal frank with large INDIA at top and Wheel of Ashoka at the right side of India. POSTAGE and RUPEES in vertical panels at sides with "P.B.000" prefix low between the Town Mark and the Frank. Only Double Circle Town Mark found. The Meter Number and prefix are found in two different sizes.



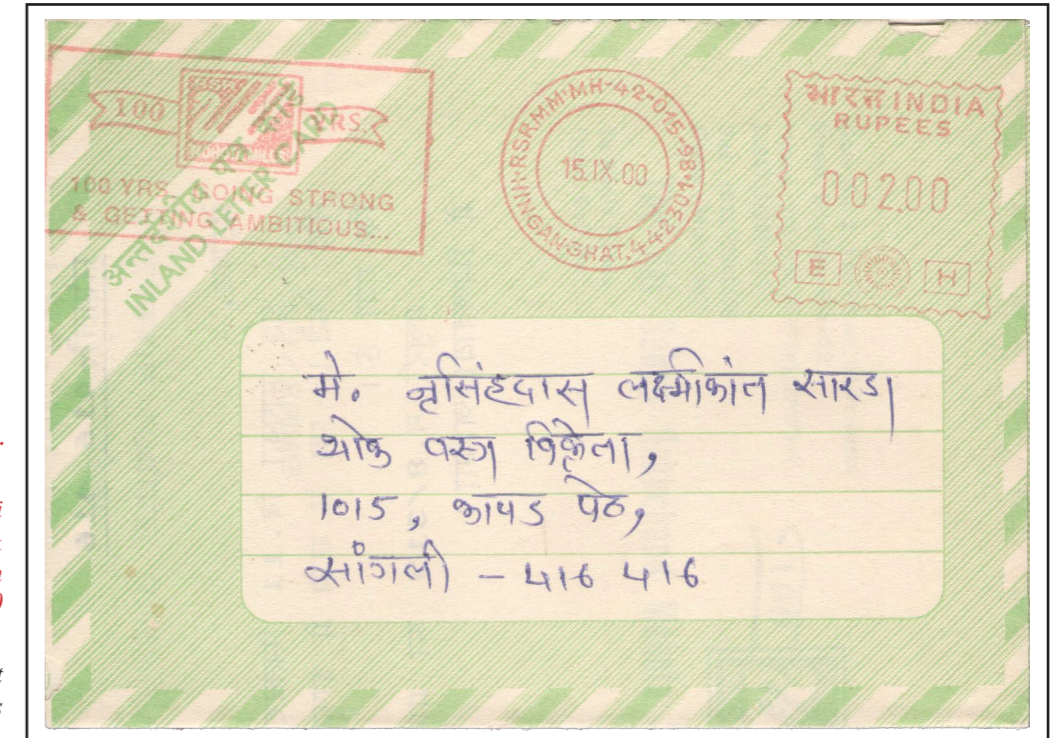
Cover with Pitney Bowes "5300" MV Frank with License No. BYN-846 of the sender Reliance Consultancy Services Limited, Bombay with Town Mark of Bombay and 1.00 Rupees Meter Frank.

Cover sent from Bombay on 21 November 1995 with 1 Rupee postage paid.

3.2 HASLER MAILMASTER MV

1986 - 1997

Initially 60 high speed postage meters were imported from Switzerland in 1986 for experimental use at multipurpose post office counters, including counters in metropolitan cities and there after a large number of them were put on use. Meter Franks are similar to 1982 Kilburn MV franks.



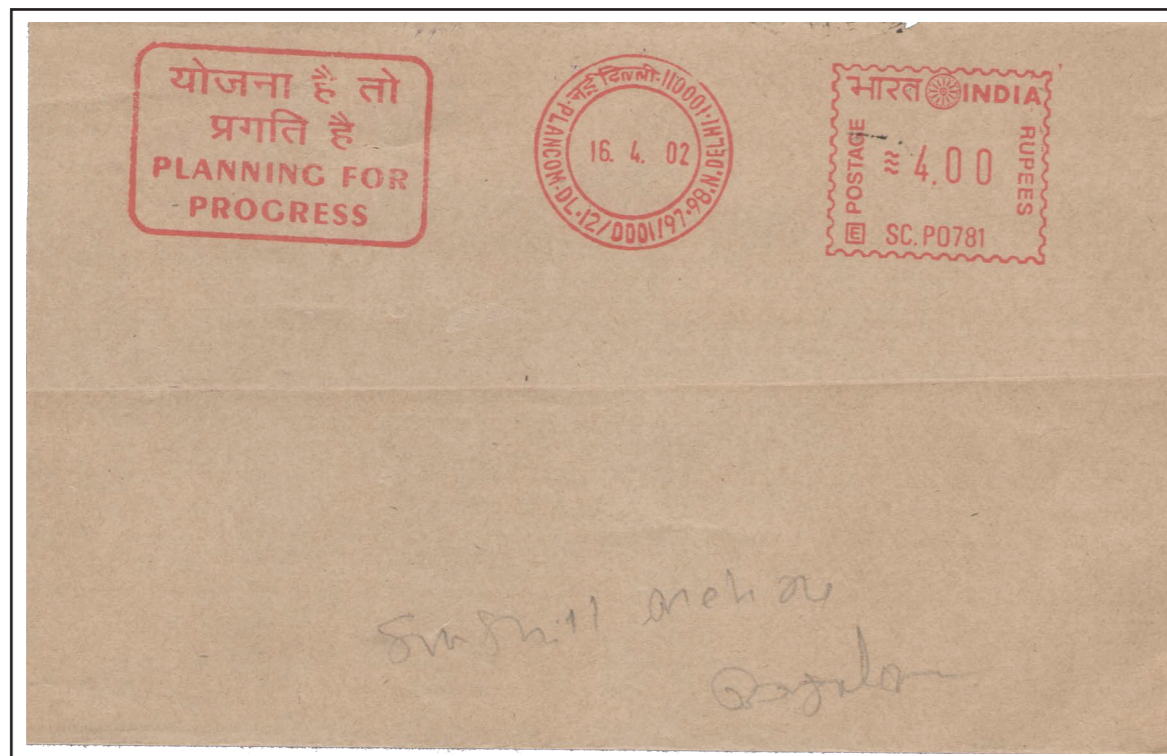
Inland Letter Card with Hasler Mailmaster MV Frank with License No. MH-42-015-98 of the sender The Rai Saheb Rekhchand Mohota Spinning & Weaving Mills Ltd., Hinganghat with Town Mark of Hinganghat and 002.00 Rupees Meter Frank.

Inland Letter Card sent from Hinganghat on 15 September 2000 with 2 Rupees postage paid.

3.3 NEOPOST "ELECTRONIC" MV

1996 - 2010

Fully electronic model F-4450 and F-4460 conforming with Asst. D.G (PO) Department of Posts, New Delhi circular No. 41-13/95-PO dated 8th April 1996. Imprint from machines F-4460 & F-4450 are indistinguishable; but three distinct varieties are identified. The franking machines are marketed in India by M/s Tele Post India Pvt. Ltd.



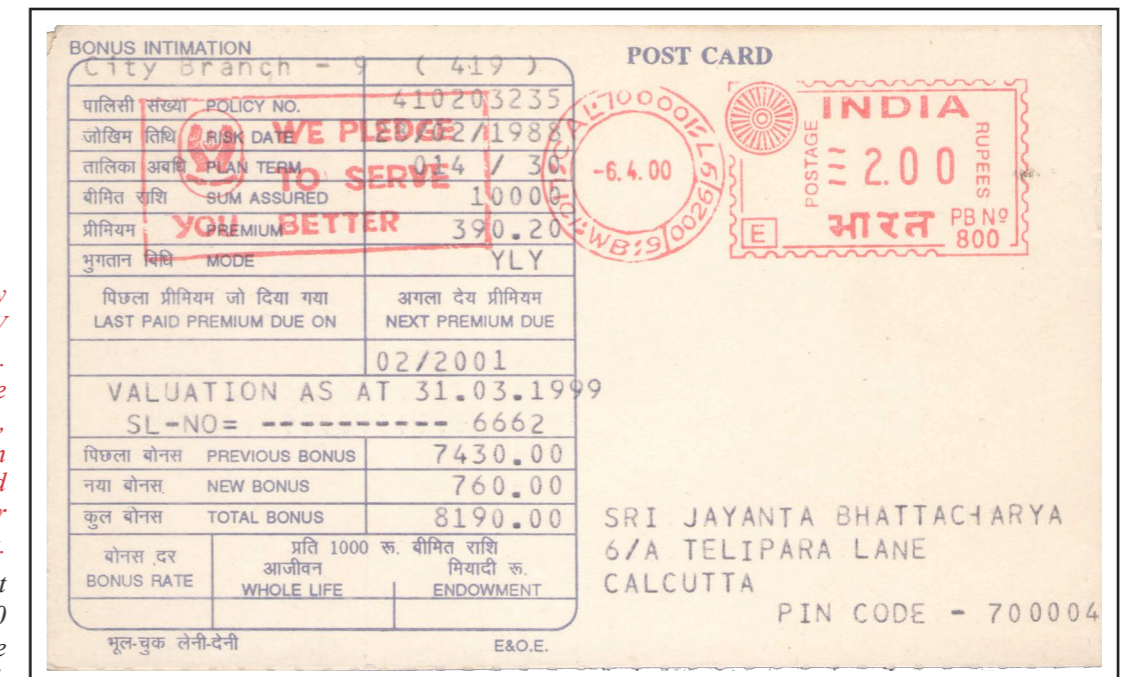
OIGS Cover with Neopost "Electronic" MV Frank with License No. DL-12/0001/97-98 of the sender Planning Commission, New Delhi with Town Mark of New Delhi and 4.00 Rupees Meter Frank.

OIGS Cover sent locally at New Delhi on 16 April 2002 with 4 Rupees postage paid.

3.4 PITNEY BOWES A900/B900 MV

1994 - 2010

Pitney Bowes "A900 / B900" is a horizontal frank with large INDIA at top and Wheel of Ashoka at the left side of India. POSTAGE and RUPEES in vertical panels at sides with "P.B.000" prefix low either at right or left of भारत. Only Double Circle Town Mark found. The frank size is 40 mm x 23 mm with Serif numerals.



Postcard with Pitney Bowes A900/B900 MV Frank with License No. WB:9/0026/97 of the sender LIC of India, Calcutta with Town Mark of Calcutta and 2.00 Rupees Meter Frank.

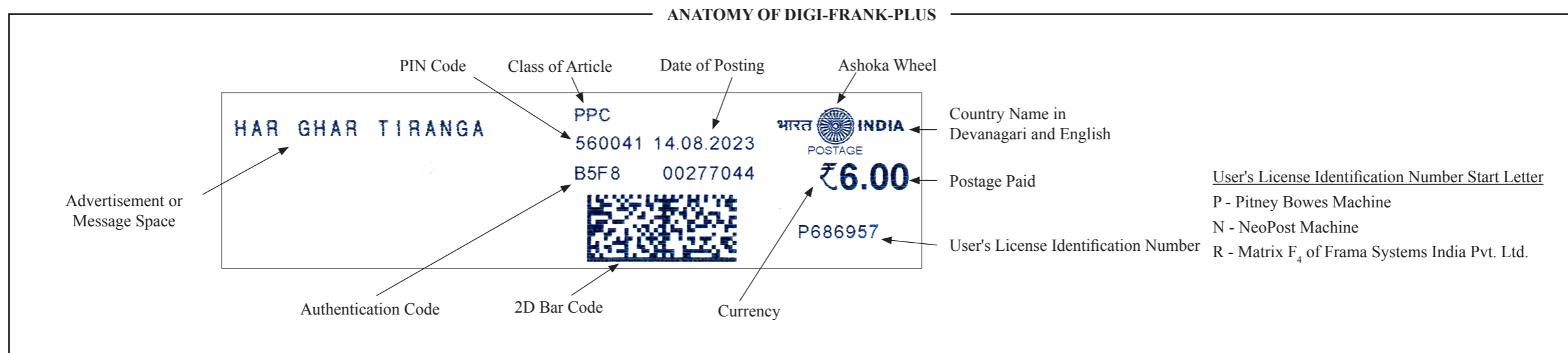
Postcard sent locally at Calcutta on 6 April 2000 with 2 Rupees postage paid.

3.0 ELECTRONIC & REMOTELY MANAGED FRANKING MACHINES

3.4 REMOTELY MANAGED FRANKING MACHINES

2010 - 2025

India Post has introduced Remotely Managed Franking Machines (RMFM) in place of existing Electronic Franking Machines with effect from 16th August 2010. Remotely Management Franking System means that the machines working in this system need not be physically carried to the Post Office for loading postage value on to the machines. This can be done through remote centers. Meter Marks or the Frankings of the new machines are in Blue colour instead of the usual Red and indicate the class of article, PIN code, authentication code, date of Frank, mail item number, license identifier number, frank value and 2D bar code. The 2D bar code contains important information encoded therein, viz. ascending and descending meter readings, class of article, number of items, PIN code number, value of the frank and license identifier number. This new generation, digitally operated franking system, on which new franking machines are based, has been appropriately named the “Digi-Frank-Plus”.



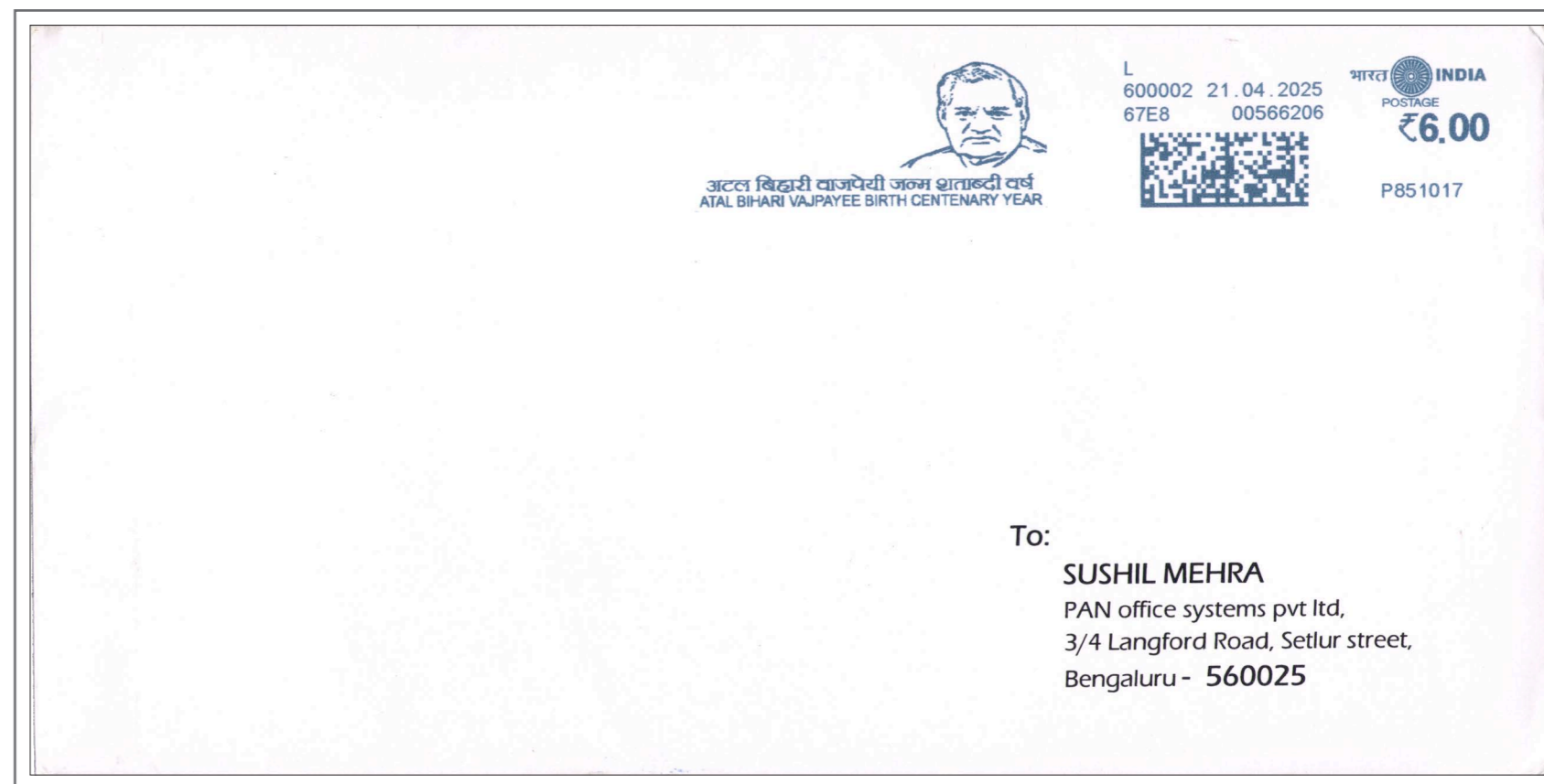
Recently The National Sorting Centre at various locations in India started providing the Remotely Managed Machine Frank with Slogan and picture of eminent personalities. Below two postal items are from Bengaluru and Chennai.



PC - Post Card | Pitney Bowes Machine | Rupee symbol in postage.

Postcard sent locally at Bangalore dated 24 April 2025 with 50 paise postage paid.

A postcard is a piece of thick paper or thin cardboard, typically rectangular, intended for writing and mailing without an envelope



L - Letter | Pitney Bowes Machine | Rupee symbol. in postage.

Cover sent from Chennai to Bangalore dated 21 April 2025 with 6 Rupees postage paid.