

# POST OFFICE AS FINANCIAL EDUCATOR: PROMOTING SAVINGS SCHEMES AND INVESTMENT PRODUCTS IN BRITISH INDIA

## INTRODUCTION

The postal system in British India played a significant role not only in mail transmission but also in encouraging financial literacy and public savings. Beginning with adhesive slogan labels in the late nineteenth century and later through machine slogan cancellations, the Post Office became an effective instrument for spreading awareness of savings schemes, insurance services, war loans, and government-backed investment products.

The earliest promotional labels of the 1880s were printed on gummed and ungummed sheets, individually cut and affixed to covers.

By 1917, slogan cancellations applied directly by postal machinery became an organised and widespread method of public financial communication.

These postal slogans reflected broader governmental efforts to mobilise public capital, encourage thrift, and strengthen financial participation among ordinary citizens.

## PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This exhibit examines the evolution of financial-awareness slogan postmarks and special postal markings used in British India from the late nineteenth century until the end of colonial rule.

It traces the transition from early adhesive propaganda labels to machine-applied slogan cancellations, illustrating how the postal system promoted savings schemes, insurance and annuity programmes, Savings Certificates, War Loans, Defence Bonds, and other government-backed investment instruments.

Through official postal campaigns and related public financial drives, the exhibit demonstrates the growing role of postal communication in encouraging thrift, investment, and financial awareness among the public.

## EXHIBIT PLAN

SI	Section	Pages
1	TITLE PAGE	1
2	FINANCIAL AWARENESS: ADHESIVE LABELS OF 1880'S	2
3	FINANCIAL PRODUCTS: Rs 10 PO CASH CERTIFICATE 1917	3
4	FINANCIAL PRODUCTS: 6% COMPOUND INTEREST P.O. CASH CERTIFICATES 1924	4
5	FINANCIAL PRODUCTS: TREASURY BONDS 1931	5
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7	FINANCIAL PRODUCTS: DEFENCE SAVINGS CERTIFICATE 1940	7
8	WAR RELATED PROPAGANDA/ CONCLUSION	8

## REFERENCES

- 1)A. K. Bayanwala: Slogans & Special Post-Marks of India
- 2)Brian Cartwright: Slogan Cancellations (IP)
- 3)B.T.Cheverton: Slogan Postmarks (IP)

(IP)= INDIA POST, published by India Study Circle, London



### 1<sup>st</sup> INDIAN POSTAL SLOGAN, USED IN 1882.

Printed **डाकखाने में सेविंग बैंक खोले गये हैं। डाकखाने में पूछो**, on a label meaning **"A Savings Bank has been opened at the Post Office. Enquire at the post Office"**.

Delivered to Sialkot (currently Pakistan) on June 12, 1882 from somewhere in Kashmir State. POSTAGE DUE 1 ANNA affixed as Kashmir stamp used for delivery outside the State. Bayanwala Type No. Sl. 1

**Currently, more than 1,55,000 post offices offer postal savings services.**

## TREATMENT

The exhibit follows a developmental and functional treatment illustrating the evolution of postal financial propaganda from early adhesive slogan labels to machine slogan cancellations promoting savings schemes, investment products, wartime financial mobilisation, and public thrift campaigns.

Wherever relevant, distinctions are made between adhesive labels, slogan postmarks, and special cancellations to demonstrate differing methods of dissemination.

The treatment highlights how postal slogans evolved into instruments of mass financial education and public mobilisation through the extensive postal network at minimal cost.

Classification system used by Bayanwala in his book has been uniformly used

## RARITY

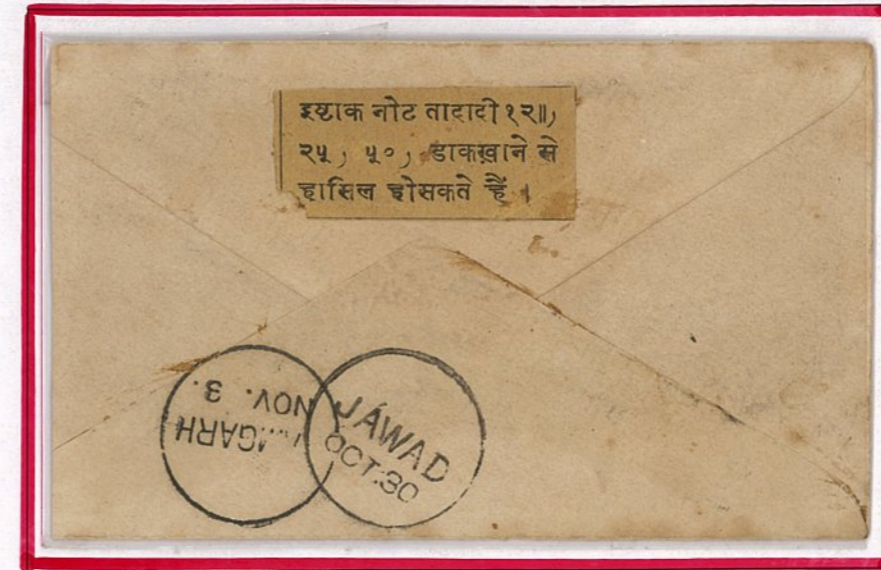
Rare/ scarce items indicated by a **red border**. No formal rarity index exists for slogan and special postmarks of this nature. The rarity of the material presented has therefore been assessed on the basis of recorded auction appearances, exhibit usage, and the known or observed period of postal usage. Classifications are unrelated to valuation.

The earliest postal publicity instructions in India were conveyed through adhesive paper labels introduced in 1882, which continued in use for several decades. These labels primarily promoted the various services and financial products available through the Post Office. The first handstamp slogan used by the Indian postal administration for conveying a public message appeared in 1917, encouraging investment in War Loans during the First World War.



पोष्टल नोट तादादी ११,  
२५, ५०, डाकखाने से  
हासिल होसकते हैं ।

Adhesive slogan affixed on a small stampless cover on from Jeypore (Jaipur) to Ajmere (Ajmer) and redirected to Nagaur in **January 1882(?)**. The English translation is "**Postal Notes of value 8 Annas, Re 1/- and Rs 2-8-0 can be obtained from the Post Office**". **Bayanwala Type No. SI-4**

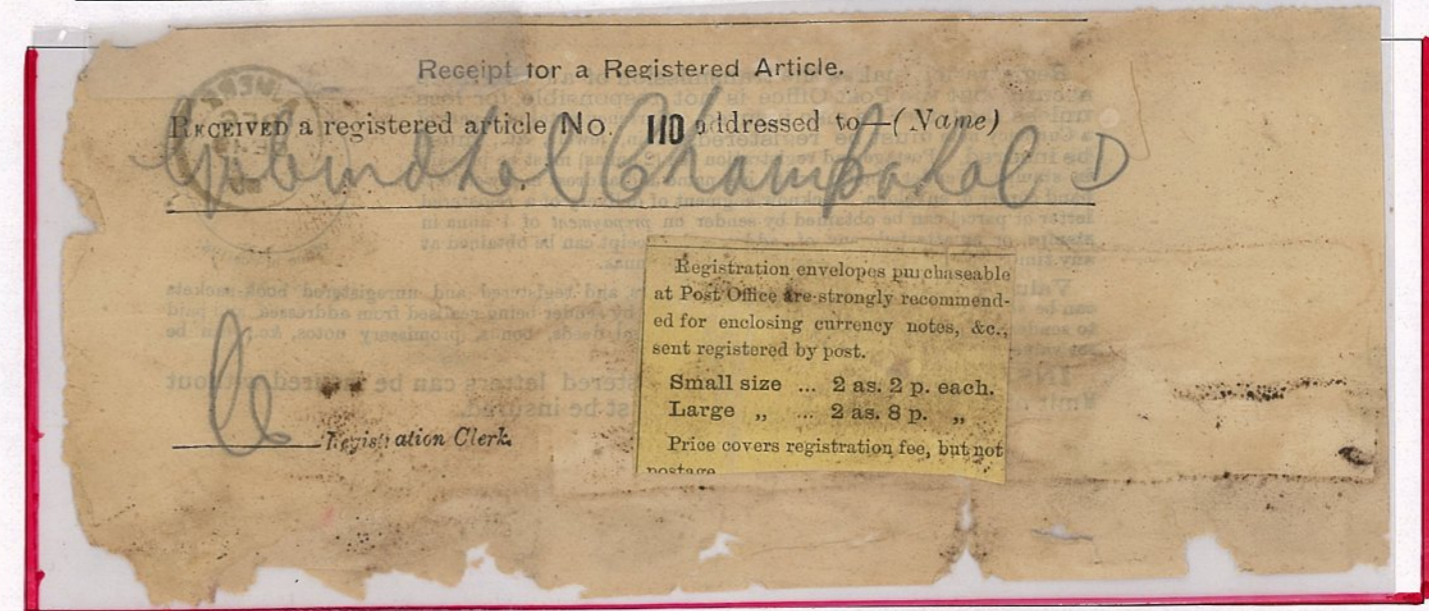


इष्टाक नोट तादादी १२५,  
२५, ५०, डाकखाने से  
हासिल होसकते हैं ।

Adhesive slogan affixed on a Lang EA 6 postal stationery from Ramgarh to Jawad in **November 1883(?)**. The English translation is "**Stock Notes of value Rs 25, Rs 50 can be obtained from the Post Office**". **Bayanwala Type No. SI-5**



Adhesive slogan affixed on a small stamped cover from Bombay to Porbandar in **1883(?)**. Printed "**India Postal notes For Rs 2-8, For Rs 1, For As. 8 obtainable at Post Office**" in English. **Unrecorded by Bayanwala.**



Registration envelopes purchasable at Post Office are strongly recommended for enclosing currency notes, &c. sent registered by post.  
Small size ... 2 as. 2 p. each.  
Large ,, ... 2 as. 8 p. ,,  
Price covers registration fee, but not postage

The 8-line message **propagating use of Registration Envelopes** for enclosing currency notes etc., affixed on a "Receipt for a Registered Article" from Ajmere dated Dec 19, 1887. **Bayanwala Type No. SI-7.**

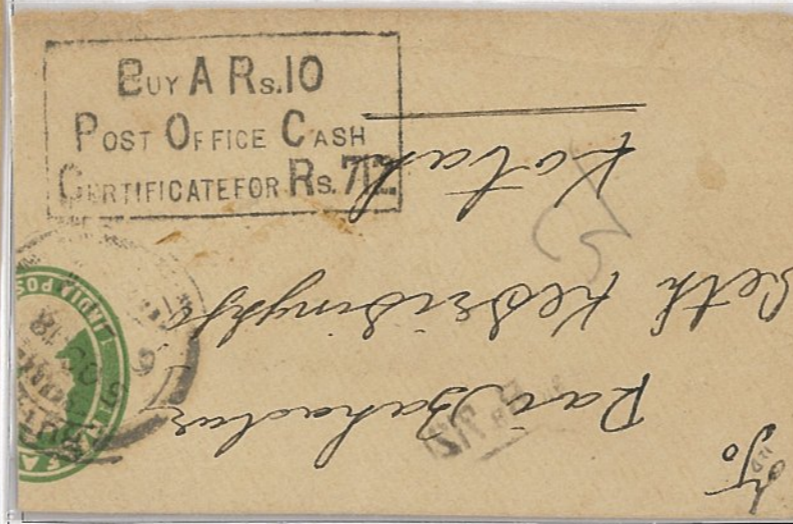
India Postal Notes  
For Rs. 2-8 } obtainable at  
For Re. 1 } Post Office.  
For As. 8 }

In 1918, during the final phase of World War I, the Government of India introduced Post Office Cash Certificates under the Post Office Cash Certificate Act of 1917 as part of wartime financial mobilisation.

A certificate with a maturity value of Rs 10 could be purchased for Rs 7 and 12 annas and redeemed after five years, functioning as an interest-bearing investment. Promoted extensively through the postal network, including slogan cancellations such as "Buy Post Office Cash Certificate," these certificates formed an important component of British India's war loan propaganda and encouraged public participation in financing the war effort.



Posted Benares City 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1917. Used as **SUPPLEMENTARY** postmark. Dimensions 32 mm X 19 mm.  
**Bayanwala Type SI -11**



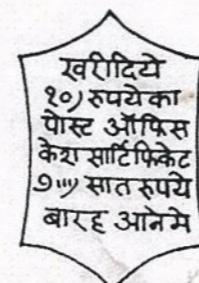
Received Kota 6<sup>th</sup> October 1918. Used as **SUPPLEMENTARY** postmark. Dimensions 46 mm X 23 mm.  
**Bayanwala Type SI -12A**



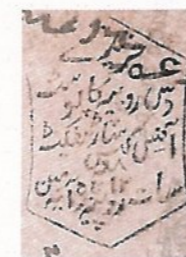
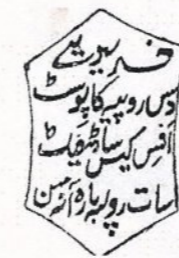
Posted Calcutta 4th August 1918. **SUPPLEMENTARY** postmark. 45 mm X 24 mm **Bayanwala Type SI -12C**



**SHIELD** type Hindi translation. Posted Jhalrapatan 15th September 1918. Used as **SUPPLEMENTARY** postmark. **Bayanwala Type SI - 13**



**HINDI**



**URDU**



**SHIELD** type **Urdu** translation. Benares January 1919. **SUPPLEMENTARY** postmark. **Bayanwala Type SI - 15**

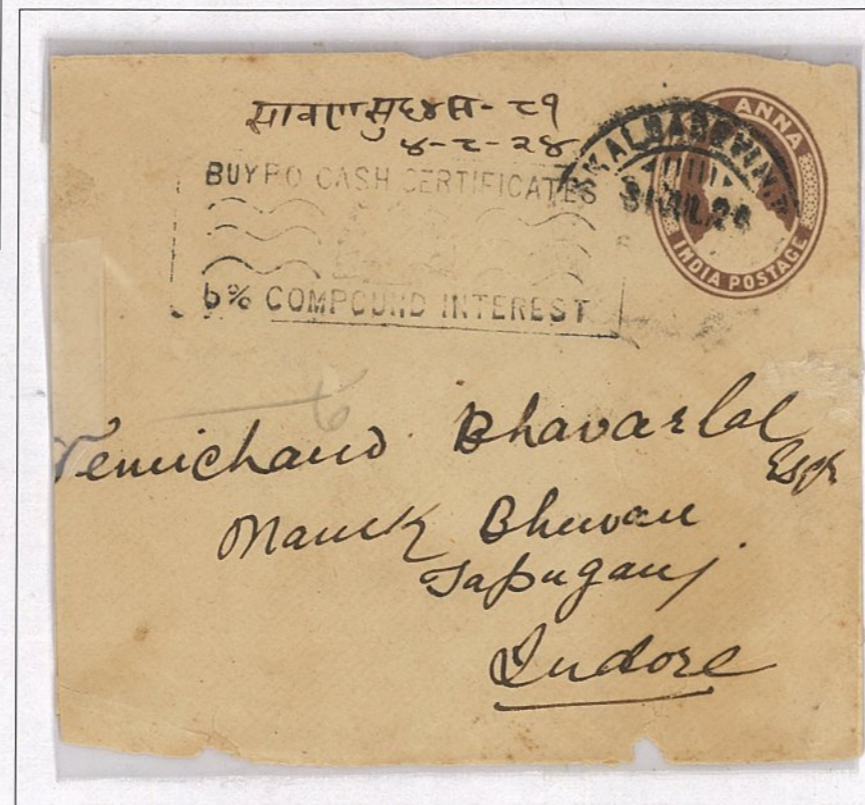
Introduced under the Post Office Cash Certificates Act of 1917, the 5-Year Cash Certificates were promoted in British India as an attractive small-savings investment scheme offering an effective return of about 6% compound interest. The relatively high return was intended to encourage wider public participation in long-term savings and to mobilise funds for British wartime expenditure. This was achieved through a discounted purchase system, whereby certificates were bought below face value and redeemed at full value upon maturity through the postal savings network.



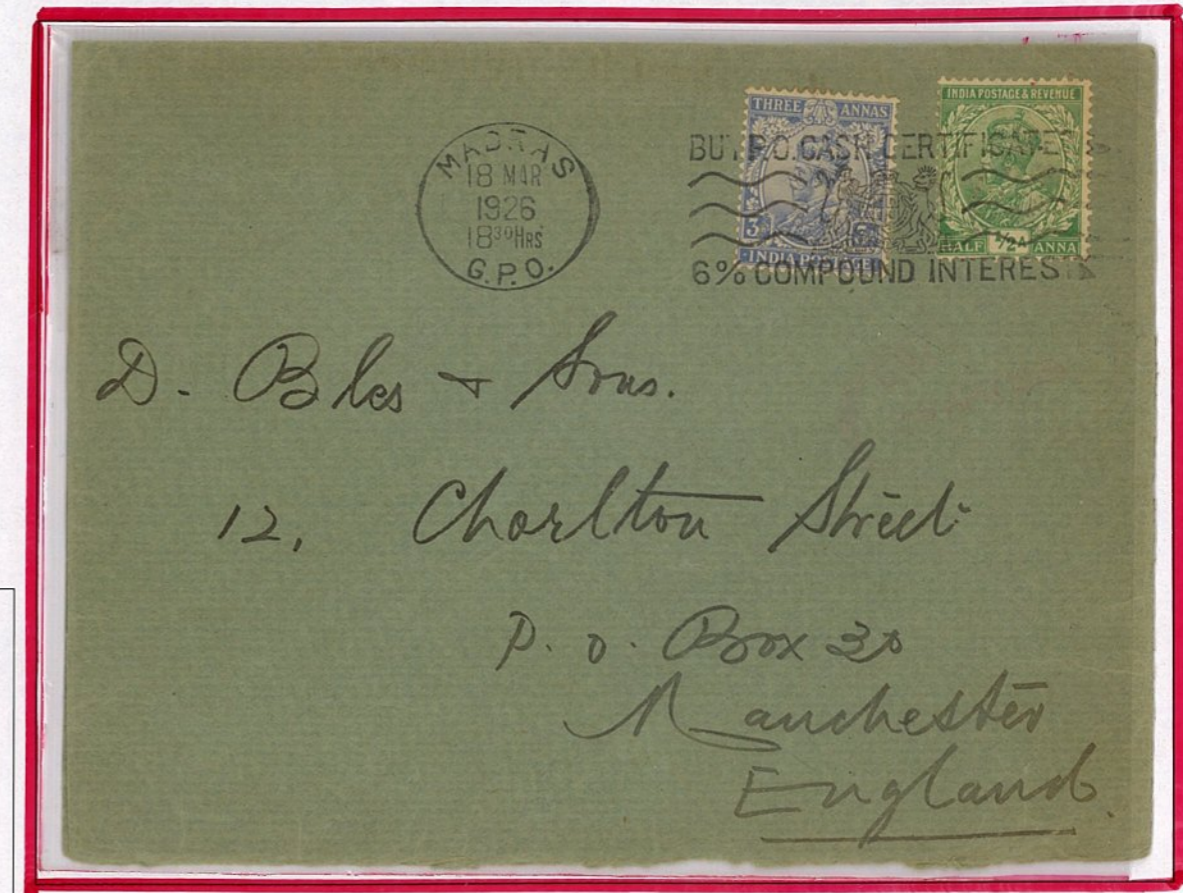
Sambhar to Agra. Reached 20th July 1924.

Used as **SUPPLEMENTARY** postmark,  
**Bayanwala Type SI-17.**

The dies of this were made of Gun Metal



Kalbadevi to Indore. Reached 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1924. Used as **SUPPLEMENTARY** postmark. Slogan in a rectangular box.  
**Bayanwala Type SI-18.**



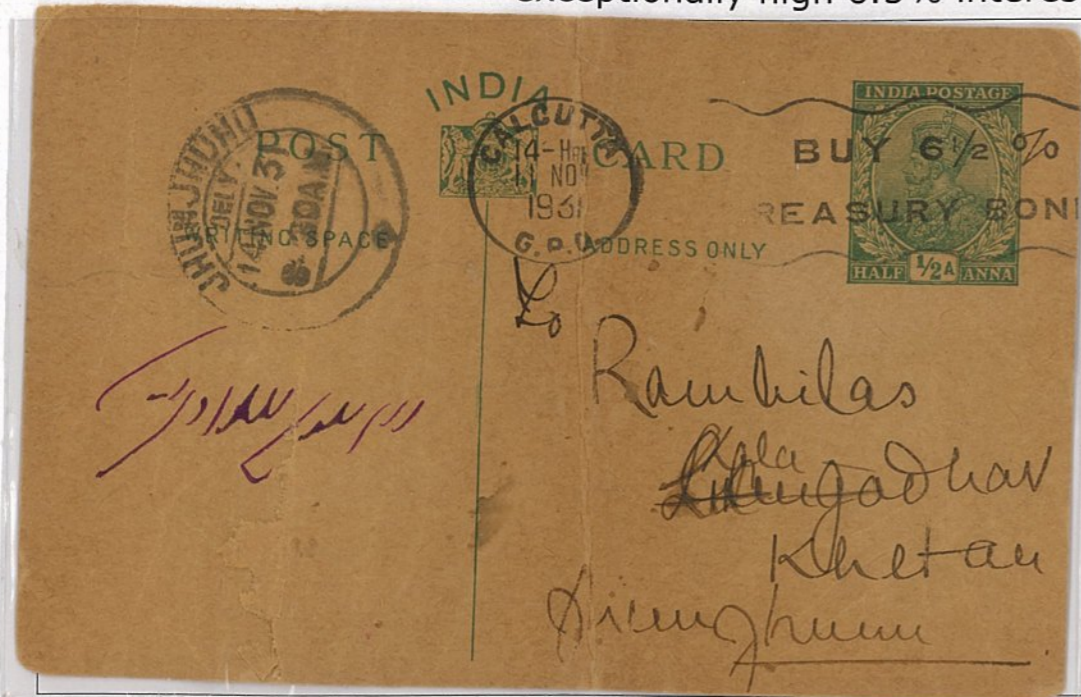
Stamped Madras GPO dated 18th March 1926. Used as **CANCELLOR.**

Duplex with date stamp on the left.

**NOT RECORDED BY BAYANWALA**

The 6.5% Rupee Loan issued in September 1931 was a significant colonial government bond floated during the early years of the Great Depression, following Britain's abandonment of the gold standard.

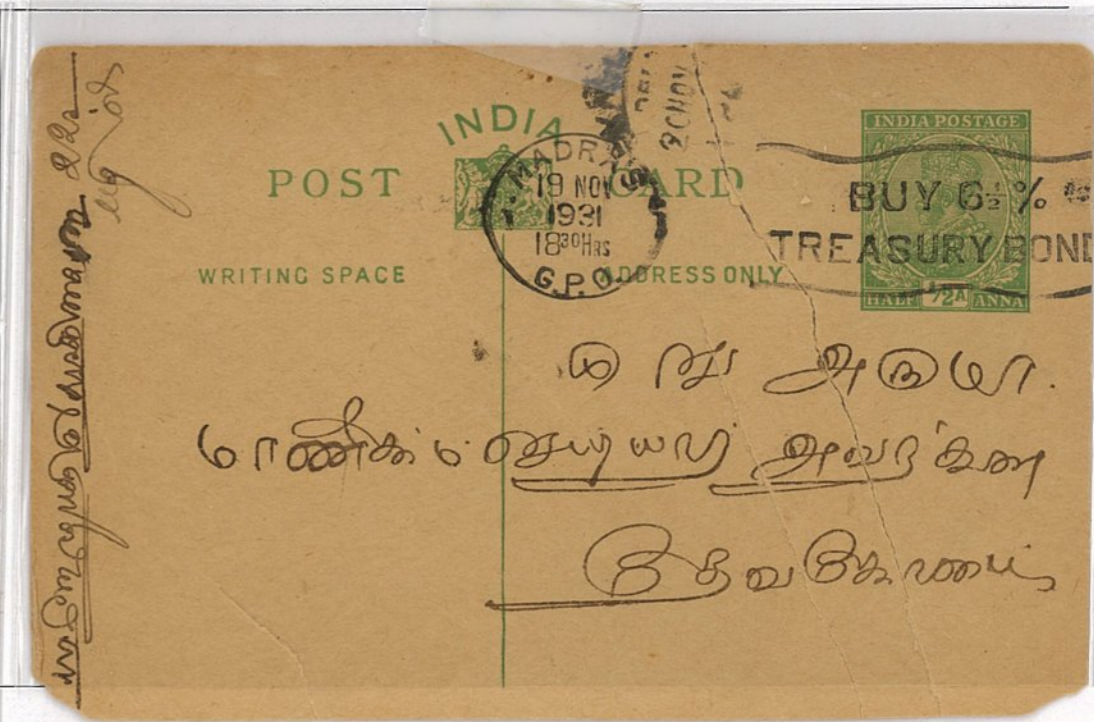
To stabilise the economy and attract investor capital during a period of severe financial uncertainty, the British Indian administration offered an exceptionally high 6.5% interest rate, one of the highest government loan rates issued during the colonial period.



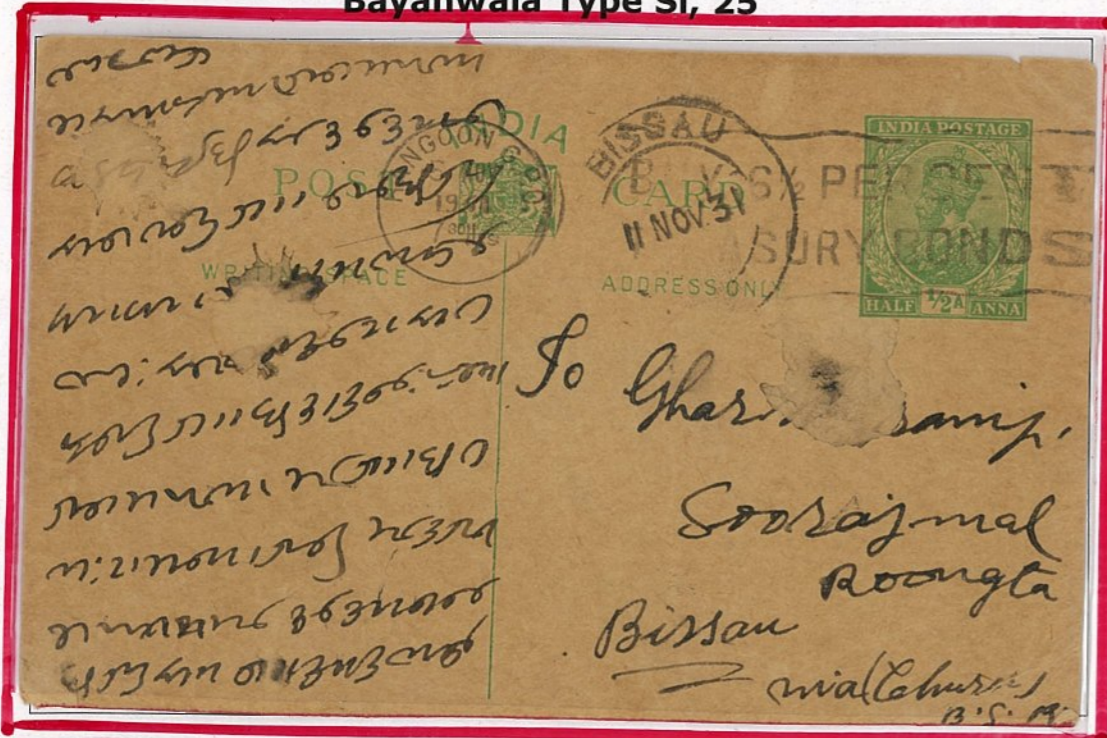
Posted Calcutta GPO 11<sup>th</sup> November 1931. 4 waves in the wavy lines. Used as **CANCELLOR**  
**Bayanwala Type SI, 25**



Delivered Calcutta GPO 17<sup>th</sup> September 1931. 4 waves in the wavy lines. Used as **DELIVERY** stamp.



Posted Madras GPO 19<sup>th</sup> November 1931. 2 waves in the wavy lines. Used as **CANCELLOR**  
**Bayanwala Type SI, 26.**



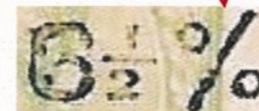
Posted Rangoon GPO 6<sup>th</sup> November 1931. 4 wavy lines. Used as **CANCELLOR**. "PERCENTAGE" written in words instead of "%age".  
**NOT RECORDED BY BAYANWALA**

**NOT RECORDED BY BAYANWALA**

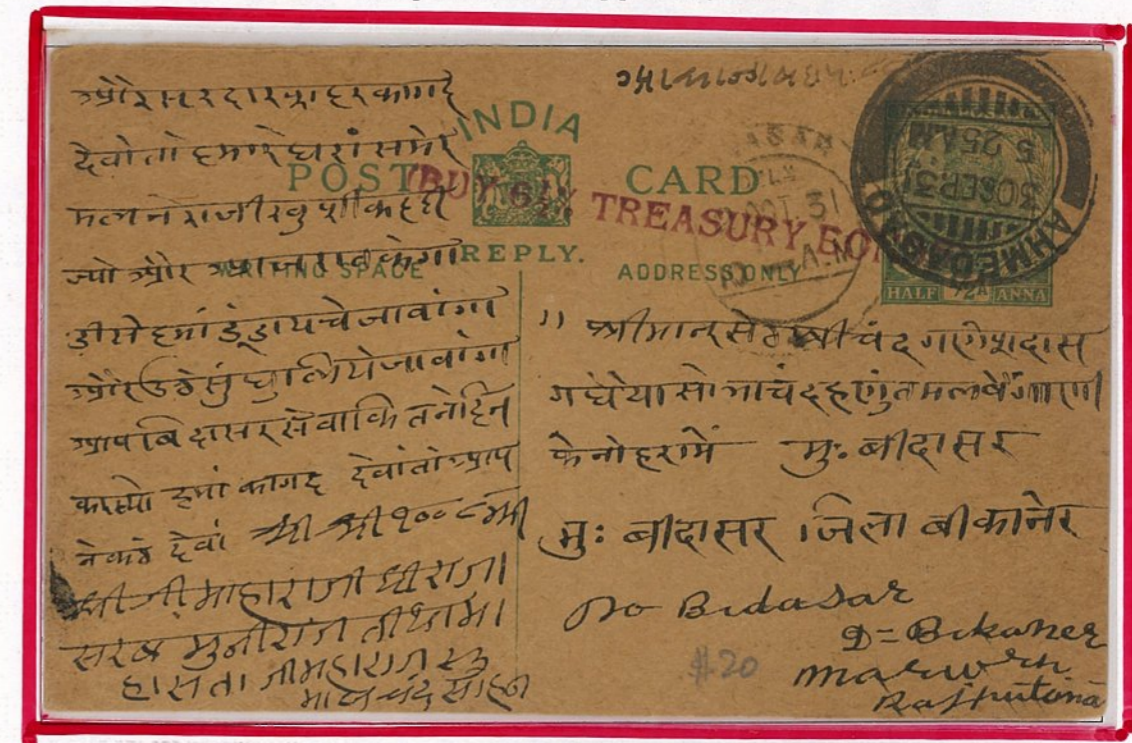


CALCUTTA "%" SYMBOL

OTHER P.O. "%" SYMBOL



**DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE "%" SYMBOL USED IN CALCUTTA AND OTHER P. O's**



Posted Ahmedabad 30<sup>th</sup> September 1931. Boxed single line red coloured message. Used as **SUPPLEMENTARY** postmark. **Bayanwala Type SI, 27.**

Post Office Cash Certificates (POCCs) were 5-year savings bonds introduced by the British Indian Government. First rolled out under the Post Office Cash Certificates Act, 1917, these certificates were heavily issued between 1933 and 1947 to promote thrift and mobilize funds. The 5-year certificates were officially discontinued on June 14, 1947. During the 1930s and World War II, Post Office Cash Certificates became an important savings instrument in British India and were issued in denominations ranging from ₹10 to ₹10,000 through post offices across the country. The colonial government promoted these certificates to control inflation and support wartime financing.



Posted Raipur 7<sup>th</sup> March 1940. Used as **CANCELLOR**.  
Bayanwala Type SI -19



Reverse of Rs 500 Certificate



**Rs 500 and Rs 1000 P.O. CASH CERTIFICATES** issued on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1937 at Lakhimpur, Assam and on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1938 at Lunding, Assam



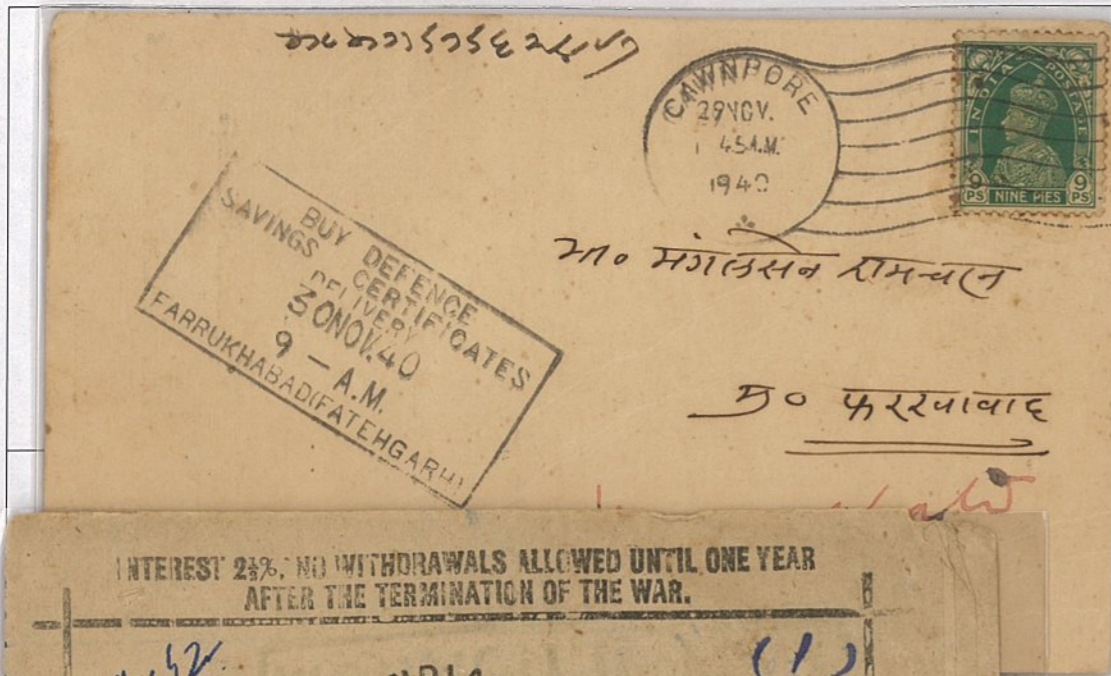
Posted Puri 11<sup>th</sup> February 1934. Used as **CANCELLOR** without date stamp. **FIRST FLIGHT COVER** of Madras Calcutta. Bayanwala Type SI -20B



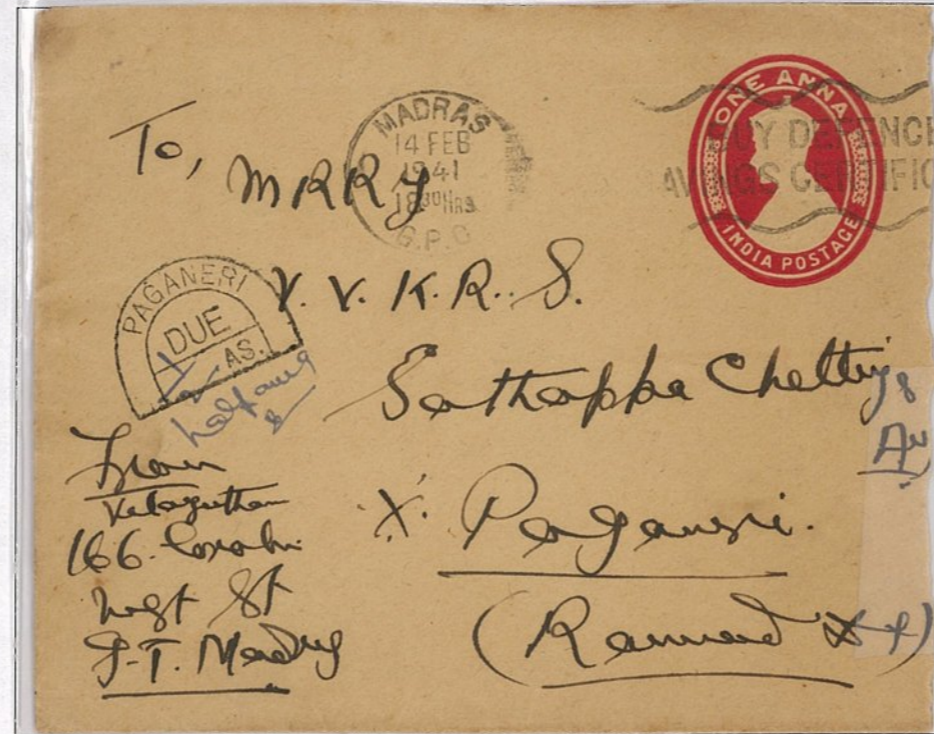
Reverse of Rs 1000 Certificate



India Defence Savings Certificates were introduced by the Government of British India in August 1940 to raise public funds for World War II military expenditure while also absorbing excess liquidity and controlling inflation. Issued through the postal savings system in denominations such as Rs. 10, Rs. 50, and Rs. 100, these certificates were primarily structured as long-term investments. In 1943, the scheme evolved into the broader Post Office National Savings Certificates programme, and following the end of the war in 1946, investors were permitted to convert their holdings into regular National Savings Certificates.

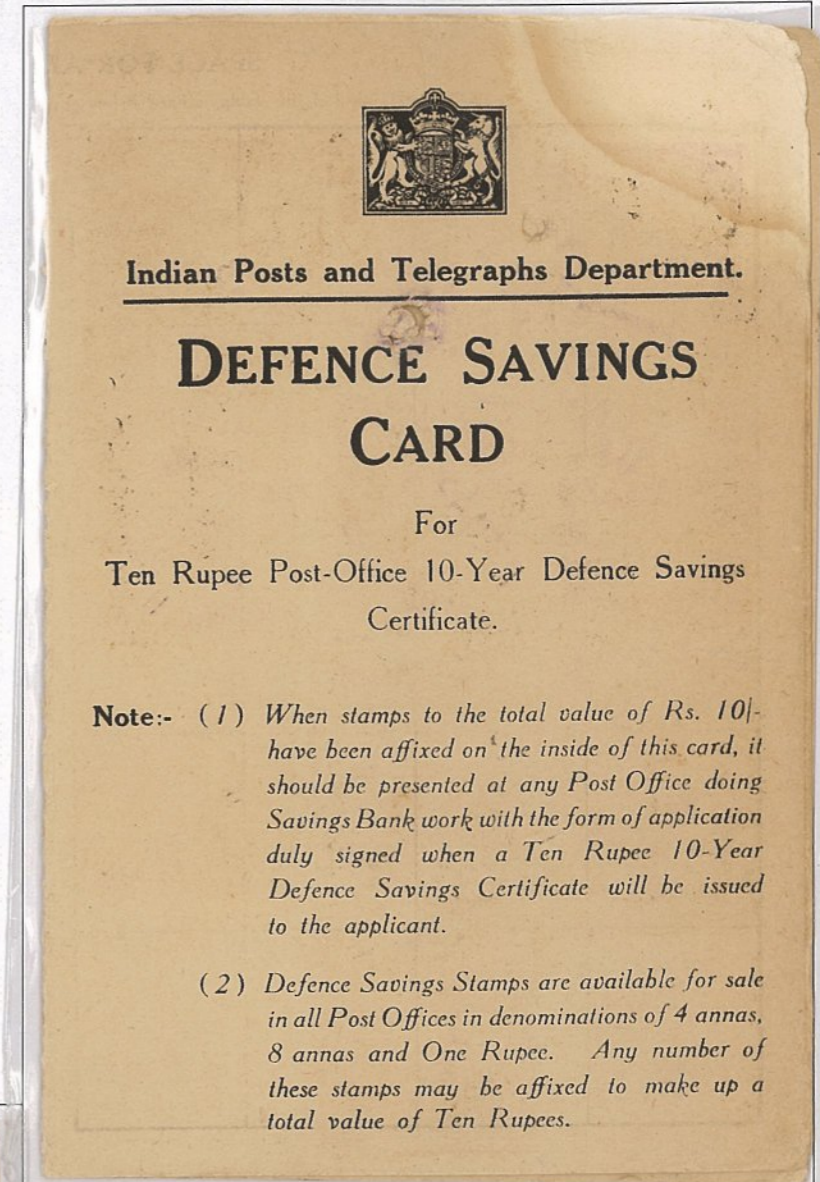


Delivered Farrukhabad 30<sup>th</sup> November 1940., Used as **DELIVERY** postmark. **Bayanwala Type SI - 29**

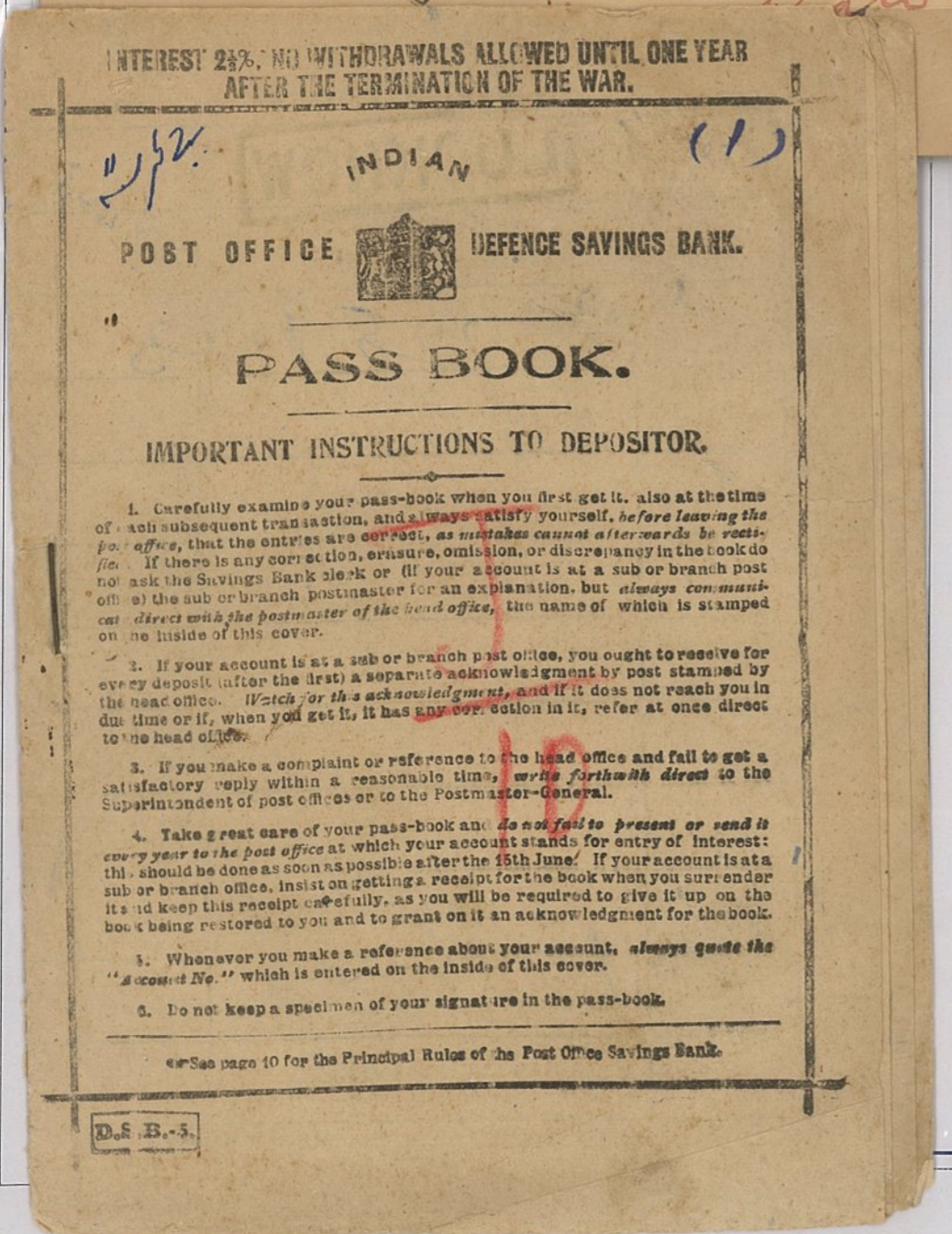


Posted Madras GPO 14<sup>th</sup> February 1941, Used as **CANCELLOR.2** wavy lines with duplex date stamp. **Bayanwala Type SI - 31**

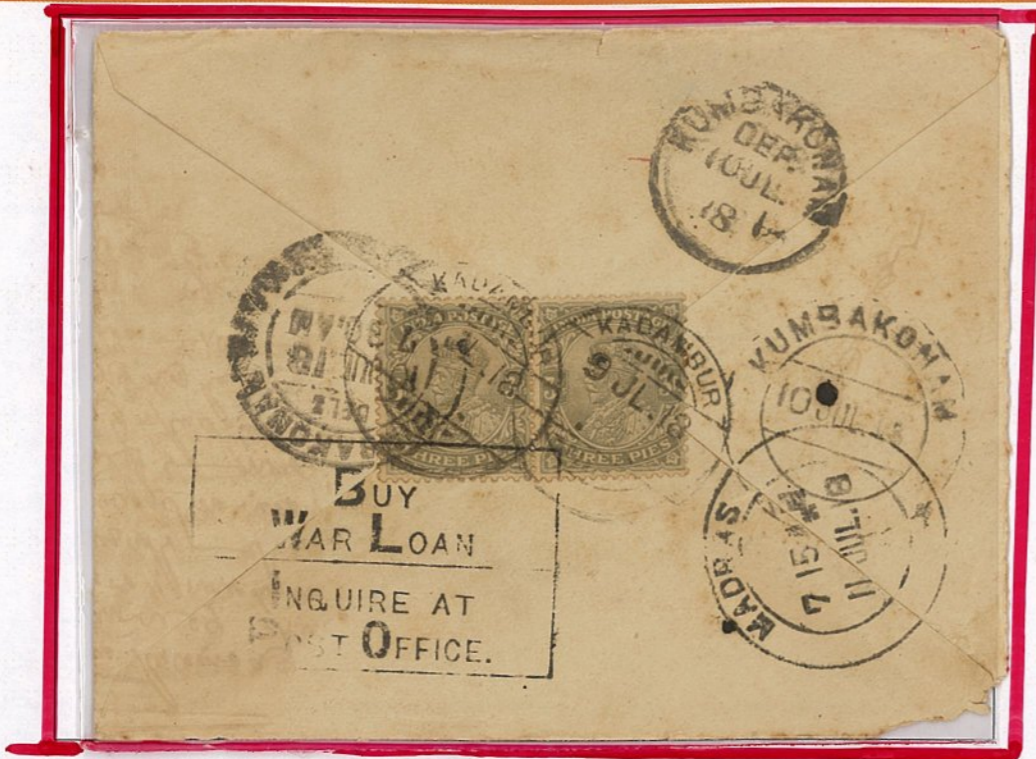
Used as **CANCELLOR** in Golden Temple 4<sup>th</sup> November 1941. **UNRECORDED BY BAYANWALA**



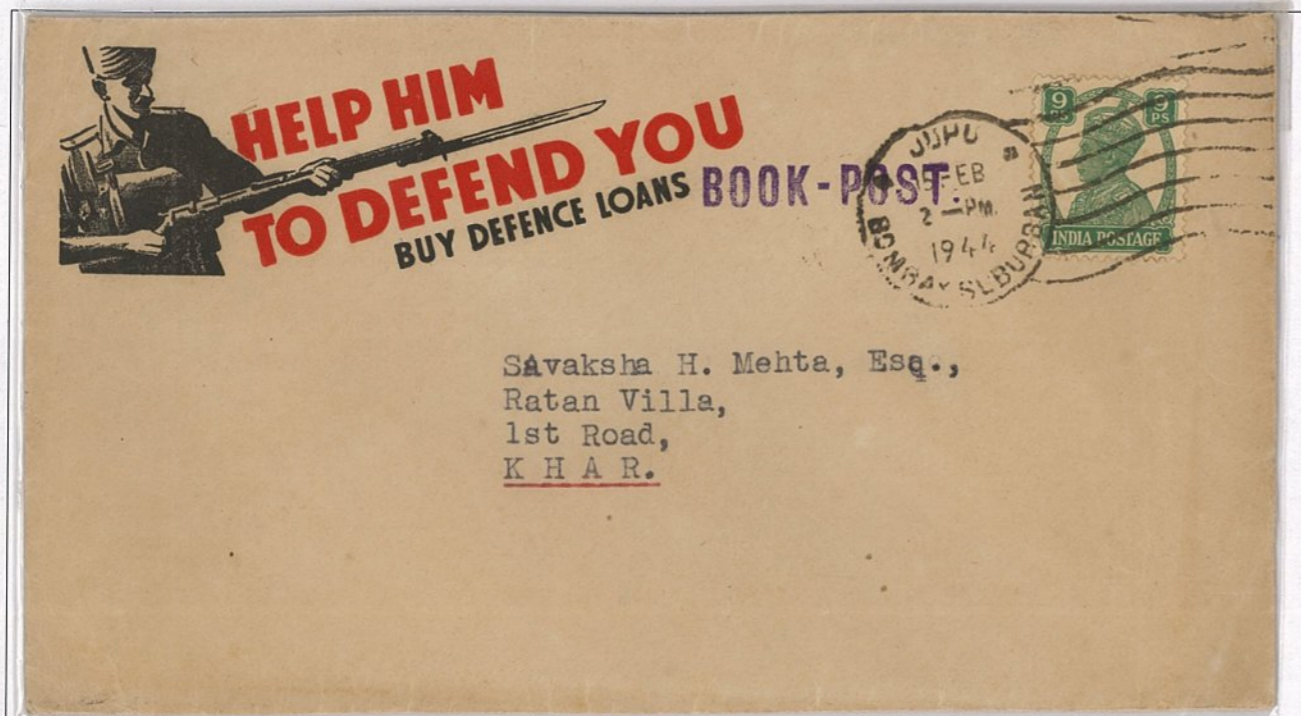
- Note:-**
- (1) When stamps to the total value of Rs. 10/- have been affixed on the inside of this card, it should be presented at any Post Office doing Savings Bank work with the form of application duly signed when a Ten Rupee 10-Year Defence Savings Certificate will be issued to the applicant.
  - (2) Defence Savings Stamps are available for sale in all Post Offices in denominations of 4 annas, 8 annas and One Rupee. Any number of these stamps may be affixed to make up a total value of Ten Rupees.



Reduced copy of inside of the pass book with Re 1 stamp "SAVE FOR INDIA'S DEFENCE"



Slogan "**BUY WAR LOAN, ENQUIRE AT THE POST OFFICE**". Post-World War I message used as SUPPLEMENTARY Post mark. Stamped Madras 11th July 1918. Effort to mobilize public investment for repaying War debts.  
**Bayanwala Type Sl. 24**



Printed slogan cancellations in British India were introduced during World War II and were used primarily by the Government and the Postal Department, with very few recorded examples from the pre-independence period.

This slogan appealed to the public to invest in **Defence Loans** and was first reportedly used at Bombay GPO in December 1941. The illustrated example is from Bombay Suburban Juhu, dated February 1944. Bayanwala **Type Sl.121**

- The exhibit demonstrates how the postal system in British India evolved beyond mail transmission to become an important instrument of financial education and public mobilisation.
- Through adhesive labels, slogan postmarks, and special postal publicity, the Post Office promoted savings habits, investment products, and government-backed financial schemes among the public.
- Beginning with the adhesive propaganda labels of the 1880s and continuing through Post Office Cash Certificates, Treasury Bonds, and Defence Savings Certificates, the exhibit traces the evolution of postal financial propaganda between 1880 and 1947.
- These financial instruments encouraged thrift, long-term savings, and wider public participation while also helping mobilise capital for administrative and wartime expenditure, particularly during the two World Wars.
- The exhibit illustrates how the extensive postal network enabled financial messages to reach large sections of society at minimal cost, transforming ordinary mail into a medium of economic awareness and public communication.
- The transition from adhesive labels to machine slogan cancellations also reflects the development of organised postal publicity in British India.
- By studying these postal slogans and related financial instruments together, the exhibit highlights an under-researched aspect of Indian postal history and demonstrates the broader social, economic, and political role of the postal administration in British India.
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