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*(This Study will be published in three parts - in this and the following two issues of 'India Post'.  
Part 1: Introduction; Speed Post markings Groups 1-6;  
Part 2: Appendices 'A' to 'F'.  
Part 3: Illustrations 1-38; Acknowledgements).*

### Introduction

In the study of Indian Postal History, the handstruck markings of the pre-adhesive period prior to 1852, and the early Indian Cancellations and Postmarks from 1852 to 1900, are indeed very interesting. Equally interesting should be the modern postal markings, including those of the Speed Post.

With effect from 1 August 1986, the Speed Post service was introduced to ensure a new, fast, secure and highly reliable service offering guaranteed time bound delivery. In this service, registered letters and parcels were being delivered within 24 hours in Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Ahmedabad, Bangalore and Hyderabad. The sender of such letters and parcels was, however, required to pay a surcharge of Rs.10 for distances up to 500kms and Rs.20 beyond 500kms in addition to the usual postage and registration charges. The surcharge would be refunded in the case of failure to deliver the article within 24 hours. Also, with effect from 1-8-86, daily International Speed Post service was introduced connecting Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras with the United Kingdom and Hong Kong, which was later extended to the United States of America, West Germany and Japan.

In 1989, this service was expanded to include 56 cities in India (Appendix 'A') and to 35 countries of the world (Appendix 'B'). With effect from 21-3-1991, this service has again been extended to 42 countries (Appendix 'C'). Articles which can be sent by Domestic Speed Post include letters, book packets and parcels. In the International Speed Post service, articles which can be sent include two-fold documents and merchandise, business and commercial documents including cheques, legal documents, computer data like discs, magnetic tapes, punched cards etc. Dutiable items can be sent with proper declaration.

The Tariff rates were modified in 1989 and these are given in Appendix 'D'. The rates were further modified on 11-6-1990 as well as on 1-12-1990, and these are given in Appendices 'E' and 'F' respectively.

### Speed Post markings proper

This study has been prepared based on the examination of only Domestic Speed Post markings for the period 12-7-1988 to 8-3-1991, on as many as 282 Registered covers, and has been broadly classified into 6 different Groups or categories. These are:

- Group 1: Those Speed Post covers affixed with only stamps;
- Group 2: Those Speed Post covers having regular or usual meter franking;
- Group 3: Those Speed Post covers having special Speed Post markings;
- Group 4: Those Speed Post covers affixed with a Registry/Calculating machine label;
- Group 5: Those Speed Post covers having Deposit Account markings
- Group 6: Compound Speed Post covers.



Before embarking on the various Groups, I wish to elucidate on the following common features of all Domestic Speed Post covers. The first and foremost mark is the one normally seen on the top of the letter proper, preferably in the centre. This is referred to in this article as the HEADING. Most of these headings are in English (Fig.1 to 6 & 8) and very scarcely in a bilingual heading (Fig.7). These headings are normally in red or purple, and sometimes in black. The headings seen are Speed Post, EMS Speed Post, Domestic Speed Post etc. Next is the Speed Post CACHET. These are normally applied on the left hand bottom corner of the cover and are rectangular in shape (Fig.9 to 17) and are in English. They have 3, 4 or 5 lines, as illustrated, showing Registered Letter No. (RL...), or No...., Date and Weight (WT...) etc. These cachets are generally purple or red in colour, and are also observed without any enclosures. Some covers posted after the stipulated time in the evening have also special markings 'Too Late for Today's Despatch' in one or two lines.

GROUP 1: As mentioned above, this Group consists of Speed Post covers sent affixed with stamps. In these, apart from the headings and cachets, all the stamps have purple, red or black postmarks (Fig.18 to 21). Total number of covers seen by me - 87 Registered Speed Post covers. Earliest is dated 27-5-88, sent from Dadar H.P.O., Bombay 400 014, and the latest from Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh and Madurai in Tamil Nadu. The details of each type of Circle and Post Office marking are given in Table I, as well as details of the cachets. Total Post Office markings are 30 in number.

GROUP 2: This Group consists of Speed Post covers having Usual or Regular Meter Franking, mostly in red, but also in purple, apart from the heading and cachet. Number of covers seen - 75, pertaining to 28 Speed Post Offices. Some of the important types of Meter Frankings seen are shown in Figures 33 to 38. As will be seen from the details shown in Table II, the meter frankings have been done directly on to the covers, or alternatively they have been first franked on a paper, and this paper has then been affixed on to the cover. In Fig.33, the rate is shown as Rs.6.50, which is a marking on a compound cover (see details under Group 6, Fig.39).

GROUP 3: This is a modified version of Group 2, in which instead of the usual meter franking, the words Speed Post have been inserted in the franked portion. Only a total of 3 covers have been seen by me. In Fig.30, the words 'Speed Post' appear in the advertisement portion of the meter franking. This cover is dated 12-7-88 and is from Dadar H.O. in Bombay. In Fig.31, the words 'Speed Post' appear in the top portion of the circular marking on the left of the Duplex franking (similar to that shown by Dr. R. Gandhi on page 43 'India Post' Jan/Mar 1991, but there 'Speed Post' appears in the bottom portion). The cover is from Meerut City in Uttar Pradesh, and is dated 24-4-1990. In Fig.32, the words 'Speed Post' appear in the right hand top portion of the Duplex meter franking (also shown by Dr. Gandhi). These types of Speed Post meter franking appear to be used somewhat scarcely, compared to the conventional meter franking.

GROUP 4: This Group consists of Speed Post covers having Registry/Calculating Machine labels affixed (Fig.22 & 23). The labels are usually white and the machine calculations are seen in red, black and purple. Total number of covers seen by me - 104, pertaining to 6 Post Offices. The details are as under:

No.	Name of P.O.	Earliest date	Latest date	No. of covers seen.
1.	Anna Road H.P.O. Madras - 600 002	23-9-88	24-2-90	2
2.	Calicut 673 001	31-5-90	-	1
3.	Cochin 682 015	13-11-89	14-2-90	2
4.	Ernakulam H.O. 682 018	1-8-88	24-4-90	40
5.	Quilon 691 001	11-11-89	11-2-91	16
6.	Trivandrum 695 014.	12-7-88	12-2-91	43



**GROUP 5:** To this Group belong those Speed Post covers having Deposit Account markings, indicating therein that all those persons/companies posting letters at these post offices have special Speed Post Deposit Accounts in the post offices and these get debited from time to time. Some of these markings are shown in Figures 24 to 29. Total number of covers seen - 11, pertaining to 5 Speed Post counters. The colours of these markings are usually red or purple. The details of post offices are:

No.	Name of P.O.	Earliest date	Latest date	No. of covers seen
1.	Cochin 682 015	23-8-88	28-11-88	3
2.	Ernakulam Ext. Counter V. Cochin 682 018	17-3-90	18-1-91	5
3.	Hyderabad Air Sorting	8-2-91	-	1
4.	Trichur	26-10-90	-	1
5.	Trivandrum	20-8-90	-	1

**GROUP 6:** This Group consists of those covers which have a combination of two types of Speed Post markings and these are referred to here as 'Compound Covers'. Total number of covers seen - 2 only. One has been sent from Trivandrum G.P.O., dated 12-3-1990 and has stamps to the value of Rs.28/10 affixed as well as a Registry/Calculating Machine label (see Fig.40). The other cover has stamps as well as Meter franking., dated 20-4-1990 and sent from Ahmedabad G.P.O. The value of the stamps is Rs.20/- and that of the Meter franking is Rs.6/50 (Fig.39).

TABLE I

DETAILS OF SPEED POST COVERS AFFIXED WITH STAMPS

Circle	Name of P.O.	Earliest date	Latest date	Pmk colour	Cachet colour	Cachet size (mm)
A. Andhra Pradesh	Buckinghampet 520 001	1-3-90	2-3-90	Purple	Purple	63 x 32
	Vijayawada	8-12-90	29-1-91	Purple	Purple	No rectangular enclosure
	VKT-Puram VJ, Ext. Counter 520 010	11-2-90	-	Black	Purple	60 x 30
B. Bihar	Dhanbad H.O. 526 001	5-1-90	29-5-90	Black	Purple	No rectangular enclosure
	Hinoo P.O.	17-3-90	-	Purple	Purple	Oval 54 x 44
C. Delhi	Eastern Court P.O. 110 001	16-7-88	-	Black	Purple	51 x 31
	Safdarjung	18-1-91	-	Black	Purple	65 x 20
D. Gujarat	Ahmedabad R.M.S. 380 002	8-2-90	29-8-90	Black	Purple	60 x 24
	Navrangpura	27-1-89	24-4-90	Black	Purple	64 x 27
	Vadodara H.O.	23-8-88	27-10-90	Black	Purple	54 x 25
E. Madhya Pradesh	Gwalior 474 002	23-11-90	-	Black	Black	55 x 34
F. Maharashtra	Bombay G.P.O. 400 001	27-10-90	-	Purple	Purple	32 x 25
	Dadar H.P.O. 400 014	27-5-88	3-3-90	Purple	Purple	65 x 32
	Goregaon East P.O.	3-3-90	-	Red	Red	No rectangular enclosure
	Nariman Point 400 021	31-8-88	-	Black	Purple	52 x 34
G. Karnataka	Koramangala 560 034	13-3-90	-	Black	Purple	62 x 23
	Peenya S.I.P.O. 560 058	19-1-91	-	Black	Purple	No rectangular enclosure
	Jayanagar III Block 560 011	23-1-91	-	Black	Purple	64 x 22
H. Kerala	Quilon	8-3-90	-	Black	Purple	55 x 38

I. Tamil Nadu	Madurai 625 001	22-5-89	29-1-91	Red	Red	44 x 22
	Tiruchirapalli 620 001	11-7-88	22-8-88	Red	Red	60 x 30
	Coimbatore	22-5-89	23-8-90	Red	Red	No rectangular enclosure
	Graeme's Road 600 006	27-10-90	-	Black	Black	54 x 28
	Trivandrum 692 014	1-9-88	-	Purple	Purple	
	Ambattur Indust. Estate 600 058	8-12-89	24-9-90	Black	Purple	55 x 20
	Anna Road H.P.O. 600 002	2-3-90	-	Red	Red	No rectangular enclosure
	Ext. Counter Cathedral 600 006	22-1-91	-	Black	Purple	56 x 18
J. Assam	Guwahati	30-5-90	3-12-90	-	Purple	None
K. West Bengal	Park Street H.O.	20-12-89	13-3-90	Black	Purple	No rectangular enclosure
L. Uttar Pradesh	Meerut City H.O.	5-11-88	28-8-90	Black	Purple	56 x 22

TABLE II

DETAILS OF POST OFFICES WITH USUAL METER FRANKING

No.	Name of P.O.	Covers seen	Dates seen		Franked pce affixed	Franking on cover	Colour of Franking
			Earliest	Latest			
1.	Mysore H.O.	1	12-2-90	-	No	Yes	Red
2.	Kalbadevi H.O.	2	12-7-88	6-9-88	No	Yes	Red
3.	Extension Counter Surat H.O.	3	22-8-88	6-9-88	Yes	No	Red
4.	Secunderabad H.P.O.	1	29-8-90	-	No	Yes	Red
5.	Extension Counter Vadodara RMS 390 005	1	22-1-91	-	No	Yes	Red
6.	Ahmedabad G.P.O.	3	26-9-89	20-3-90	No	Yes	Red
7.	Tiruchirapalli 620 001	1	10-8-88	-	Yes	No	Red
8.	Park Street H.O. 700 016	12	16-7-88	16-2-90	Yes	Yes	Red
9.	Anna Road HPO 600 002	5	24-10-89	26-10-90	Yes	No	Purple
10.	Madurai HO 625 001	6	22-3-90	21-1-91	Yes	No	Red
11.	Coimbatore 641 001	20	1-8-88	26-10-90	Yes	No	Red
12.	Bangalore G.P.O.	1	31-5-90	-	Yes	No	Purple
13.	Madras G.P.O.	1	8-7-90	-	Yes	No	Purple
14.	Meerut City H.O.	2	8-12-89	5-10-90	No	Yes	Red
15.	Hyderabad G.P.O.	6	7-11-88	27-10-90	Yes	No	Red
16.	Jayanagar III Block Bangalore-11	1	30-1-91	-	No	Yes	Red
17.	I.P.H.O. New Delhi	1	23-1-91	-	No	Yes	Red
18.	Airport P.O. 400 099	1	4-2-91	-	No	Yes	Red
19.	Nehru Place P.O. 110 019	1	31-5-90	-	No	Yes	Red
20.	Ext. Counter Jaipur G.P.O. 502 001	3	25-8-88	10-11-89	No	Yes	Red
21.	Parliament Street H.O. 110 001	1	20-8-90	-	Yes	No	Red
22.	Nariman Point P.O.	2	28-7-88	3-8-88	No	Yes	Red
23.	Vadodara H.O.	1	21-1-91	-	No	Yes	Red
24.	Pune City - A	2	26-7-88	1-8-88	No	Yes	Red
25.	Collection Centre Calcutta G.P.O.	4	16-7-88	24-7-89	Yes	No	Red
26.	Dadar H.P.O. 400 014	2	8-12-89	26-12-89	No	Yes	Red
27.	Nagpur 440 001	1	27-10-90	-	Yes	No	Red
28.	Wagle Ind. Estate Thane 400 604.	1	15-11-89	-	No	Yes	Red