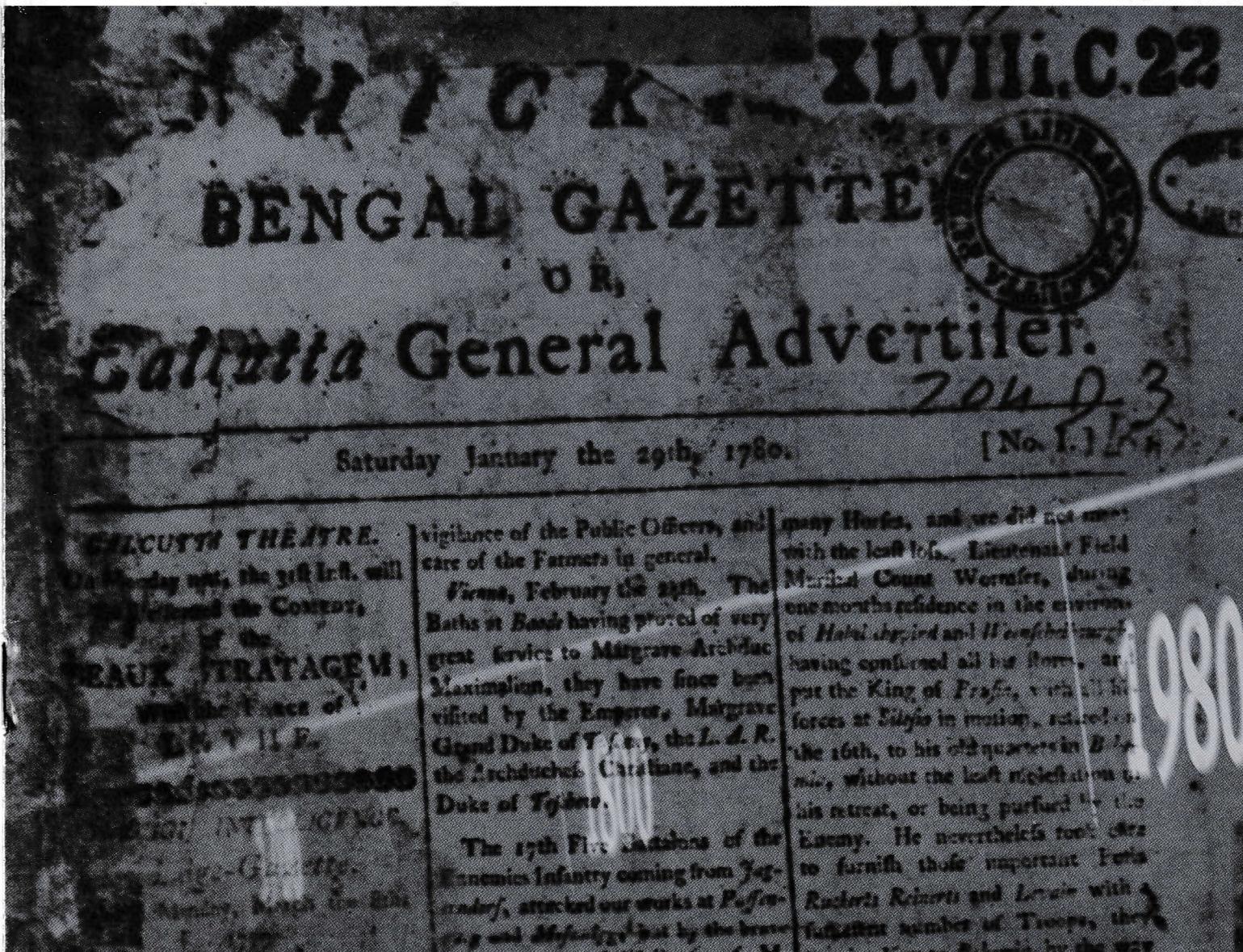


# History of Printing and Publishing Media in India: An Outline



## Foreword

IfraExpo India 2007 is the first ever Ifra-Expo to be held outside Europe. The objective of bringing out this booklet is to give delegates and visitors to the Expo an outline of the fascinating history of the printing and publishing media in India, a history that is more than 450 years old. Leading events up to 1980 have been covered; those of the past 25-odd years, being too recent, have not been included.

This publication would not have been possible without the generous contribution of R. Narayanan, president of The Printing Technologists Forum, Chennai, who gladly gave us access to his personal collections of clippings and pictures. A lot of material published here has been sourced from B.S. Kesavan's *History of Printing and Publishing in India*.

## About Ifra

Ifra ([www.ifra.com](http://www.ifra.com)) is the world's leading association for newspaper and media publishing with 10 locations worldwide. Services – offered primarily to Ifra members – include trade exhibitions, international conferences, seminars and training events, as well as consulting and various publications.

Ifra has more than 3,000 members in about 70 countries and is headquartered in Darmstadt, Germany. Ifra publishes the monthly trade magazine, *newspaper techniques*, in five languages – English, French, German, Russian and Spanish.

Ifra India ([www.ifra.com/india](http://www.ifra.com/india)), headquartered in Chennai, started operations in 2001 to bring Ifra services closer to members in the region which includes countries in South Asia. However, Ifra activities began in India in 1991 when an annual conference was offered through a representative office. Ifra India now has 49 members, comprising publications and suppliers. Most leading publications are Ifra members.

## Imprint

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## Introduction

The locations of the earliest printing presses in India hugged the coastline of the Peninsula – Goa, Cochin, Tranquebar (near Madras), Fort William (Calcutta), Serampore and Bombay. The history of printing in India had a lot to do with Portuguese, Catholic and Protestant missions that were sent to the country to spread the word of God. As B.S. Kesavan, author of the three-volume *History of Printing and Publishing in India*, says, printing helped bring knowledge from exclusive palm-leaves and other manuscripts into the houses of ordinary people and familiarise them with their cultural heritage. Printing had no political, social or religious barrier, and was a mode of broadcasting ideas adopted by all shades of opinion.

In 1542, St Francis Xavier, a Spaniard, was in Tranquebar (Tarangambadi), a Danish settlement, converting the 'paravas' or fishermen to Christianity. When the Viceroy of Goa, at the instruction of King Joan III of Portugal, opened schools for Indian Christians, books for religious instruction had to be provided. Xavier's book, *Catechism*, in manuscript form, was the earliest book to be taught. Two years later, *The Cartilha* became the earliest printed Tamil text in Roman script. It was printed in Lisbon, in two colours. The Christian psalms and tenets were printed in bold typefaces in Tamil. Between the lines of Tamil printing, the same matter was printed in Portuguese. To an extent, the desire of the Christian missionaries to translate the Bible into every possible language resulted in the development of many Indian languages.

## Important events

1556

**1556:** Printing arrives in India a little over 100 years after Gutenberg's path-breaking contribution of moveable type. The Portuguese authorities dispatch a printing press along with missionaries to Abyssinia via Goa. The Ethiopian emperor is not keen to receive the missionaries and the press remains in Goa; it is installed at the College of St Paul's. Goa thus becomes the cradle of Indian printing.

**1557:** Pedro Luis, a Tamil from the Portuguese mission in Punniyakalay near Tuticorin, teams up with a Portuguese, Joao Gonclaves, to cast the first Tamil type. Joao de Faria, another Portuguese, improves on this type in Quilon and uses it to print the first book in an Indian language, a catechism called *Doctrina Christam*.

**1570:** A printing press is set up in Ambazhakad, near Cochin.

**1580:** The Jesuits present a polyglot Bible to Emperor Akbar, but does not succeed in arousing much curiosity.

**1626:** The first dictionary in Konkani is published in two volumes, in Goa.

**1670:** Parsee businessman Bhimjee Parikh imports the first printing press in Bombay.

**1675:** The English East India Company brings a printer to Surat but is unable to cast type in Indian scripts; the venture fails.

**1706:** Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg is the first German Lutheran Missionary sent by the King of Denmark, Frederick IV, to India to establish a Protestant Mission in India. The 23-year-old arrives in Tranquebar with a Royal Danish order to propogate the Gospel among the 'Malabarians' as the Tamils are known then. He succeeds in getting a press from the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) in London.

1712

**1712:** In Tranquebar is established the first press in Tamil Nadu, which revives printing in India. It prints the *Catechism*, a Tamil translation of the New Testament. The Tamil types cast in Halle, Germany, by those acquainted with the language are brought to Tranquebar by three German printers, the most notable being Johann Gottlieb Adler. The Mission accepts Dutch requests to print Tamil and Sinhalese text and assists in the work in Sri Lanka. Printing of Tamil books begins in 1715.

Ziegenbalg is convinced that if the Mission is to succeed, the language of the people has to be used extensively. He absorbs himself in the reading of Tamil and in time becomes a Tamil scholar. His *Grammatica Damulica*, printed in Halle in 1716, enables scholars like Friedrich Rueckert to study phonetics, accidence and syntax.

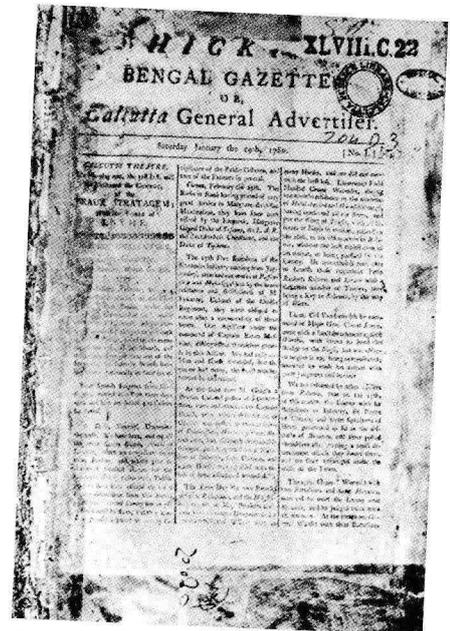
**1733:** The Raja Sri Sarfoji Maharaja's Press is set up in Tanjore.

**1738:** Linguist Joseph Beschi's (a Venetian priest who volunteers for the Indian Mission) *Grammar of Kodunthamizh* is printed at the Tranquebar Mission Press.

**1761:** Printing arrives in Madras thanks to the Anglo-French rivalry in the Carnatic. Sir Eyre Coote takes as booty a printing press ("an unused hand-press and some cases of type and equipment") brought to India from France in 1758 by Comte de Lally, from the French settlement of Pondicherry after the siege of 1761. The SPCK Press is founded in the Madras suburb of Vepery by Johann Fabricius. Fabricius' Tamil and English Dictionary is printed here. The Vepery missionaries then acquire their own press for Tamil printing (the translated version of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is printed here in 1793).

1733

1780



Hickey's Bengal Gazette, the first newspaper in India to be published in any language appeared in Calcutta on January 29, 1780.

**1778:** The first printing press in Bengal is installed in Hooghly. The press brings out the first book printed in north India, in the Indian language or in English – an East India Company civil servant, Nathaniel Brassey Halhed, scripts *A Grammar of the Bengali Language*. Charles Wilkins, superintendent of the Company's factories in Malda and the person who fashions Bengali moveable types based on Willem Bolts' initial specimens, is the printer. Panchanan Kar-makar is the punch cutter and type caster.

**1780:** Hickey's Bengal Gazette, the first newspaper in India to be published in any language appears, in Calcutta. It describes itself as "a weekly political and commercial paper open to all parties but influenced by none." Its scurrilous allusions to prominent figures in the Bengal administration lead to the imprisonment of its founder, printer, publisher and editor, James Augustus Hickey. The two-sheet weekly folds up in March 1782.

1784

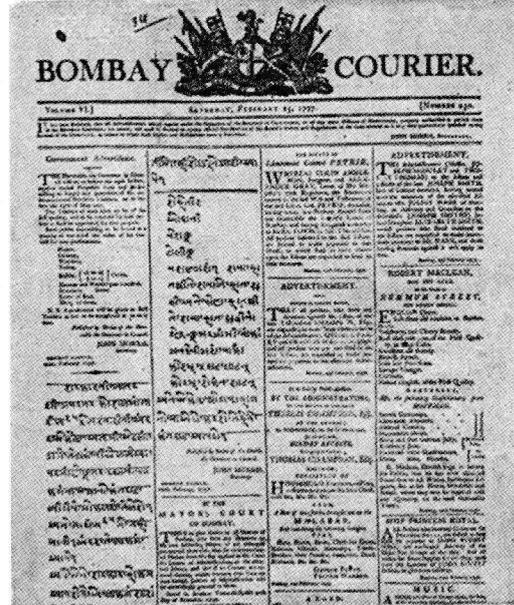
1800

1802

1820



The *Calcutta Gazette and Oriental Adviser* was launched in 1784.



The first advertisements in an Indian language paper appeared in Marathi, in the *Bombay Courier*, in 1802

**1784:** The *Calcutta Gazette and Oriental Adviser* is launched; carries notices in Bengali and Persian three years later. Although patronised by the government of the day, it is not considered an official organ.

**1785:** *The Madras Courier* appears in Madras, the city's first newspaper.

**1789:** *Bombay Herald* appears, probably the first Bombay newspaper.

**1794:** *The Hircarrah* is published from Madras.

**1798:** The celebrated *Bengal Hurkaru* starts publication in Calcutta as a weekly paper.

**1800:** The Serampore Missionaries establish their printing press with help from Dr William Carey, William Ward and Joshua Marshman, and pioneer the art of printing, starting with the Gospel of St Mathew. Carey loans Karmakar from Wilkins for two weeks, but later puts him under virtual house arrest. Karmakar stays in Serampore for the rest of his life casting type for almost all major south and Southeast Asian languages. During the following three decades, 212,000 publications (mainly scriptures) in 40 languages are issued from the press, including 38 translations of the Bible. Types are designed and cut out for the first time, ranging from moveable metal types to types in the Sarada character for Kashmiri. The Press prints Krittivasa's *Ramayana* and Kashiram Das's *Mahabharata*, plain printings, and translates John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. The Serampore Journals are also published here. Post-1840, border decorations, copied from European design, are used to embellish publications.

**1802:** The first advertisements in an Indian language paper appear, in Marathi, in the *Bombay Courier*.

**1809:** The Punjabi Press is established in Ludhiana.

**1818:** *Samachar Darpan*, the first Bengali newspaper, is published; it is patronised by the East India Company. The Calcutta School Book Society is formed, publishes many titles and distributes the books to schools in Calcutta; its formation helps many artists find an occupation.

**1820:** The Madras School Book Society is born, thanks to the initiative of Sir Thomas Munro, Governor of Madras; William Fyvie sets up the Surat Mission Press, the first in Gujarat, publishing in Gujarati. The Wesleyan Mission Press and the Basel Mission Press provide a boost to Kannada publishing. Charles Mead, printer-turned-missionary, under the auspices of the London Missionary Society, establishes for the Travancore Government a press in Trivandrum. The following year, Father Benjamin Bailey sets up the CMS Press in Kottayam.



1868

1878

1881

1901

1868: Amritha Bazaar Patrika is published as a weekly from a village in Bengal; the press moves to Calcutta three years later. Madras Mail is launched; later becomes The Mail.

1872: In Karnataka, State presses are established.

1875: The Statesman commences publication in Calcutta; it is incorporated from The Friend of India.

1877: Calendar art arrives in India (of Raja Ravi Varma's paintings); Sivakasi becomes the commercial centre for calendar art. Printing presses open in Madras.

1878: Six young nationalists led by G. Subramania Aiyer found The Hindu in 1878. The Hindu appears as an eight-page paper, quarto-size. It is initially published every Wednesday evening. The Hindu remains a weekly until 1883, turns daily in 1889. In 1905, S. Kasturiranga Iyengar takes over The Hindu and becomes its owner and editor.

1880: The Illustrated Weekly of India is founded. The Times of India Annual stands out as one of India's finest publications.

1881: The Tribune purchases its first printing press from Calcutta and starts publication from Lahore (now in Pakistan). Kesari, a Marathi daily, is launched in Poona in 1881. It is the effort of a joint undertaking by six young men, including Bal Gangadhar Tilak. The newspaper seeks to "present the truth about topics and problems as it appears to an impartial eye."

1882: Swadesamitran, the first Tamil newspaper, appears in Madras as a weekly; turns daily in 1889. Its founder is social reformer G. Subramania Aiyer.

1888: The first issue of Malayala Manorama is published from Kottayam; it marks the beginning of sustained Malayalam journalism.

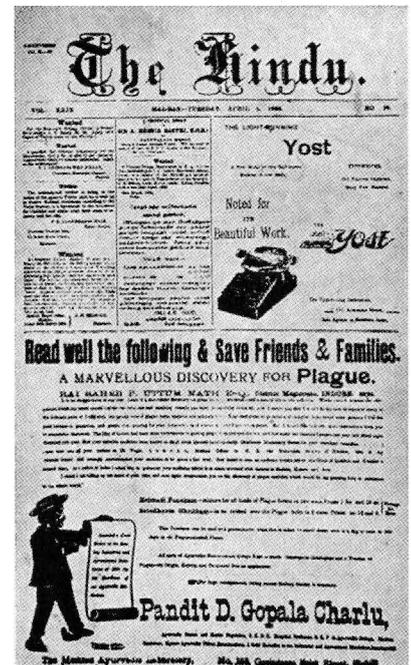
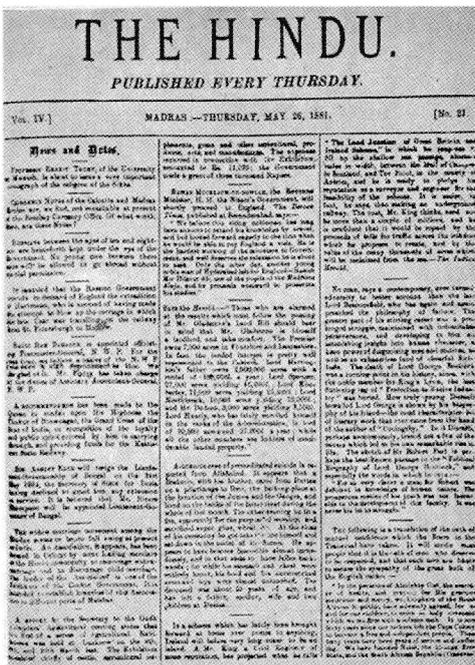
1892: Swaminatha Ayyar prints the complete edition of Silappathigaram, a literary classic that gives a comprehensive treatment to Tamil music.

1896: A lino machine activated by electricity prints The Statesman.

1901: The Times of India introduces gravure printing, a first in India.



Part of a comic strip that showed how the six men braved odds to publish Kesari, a Marathi daily.



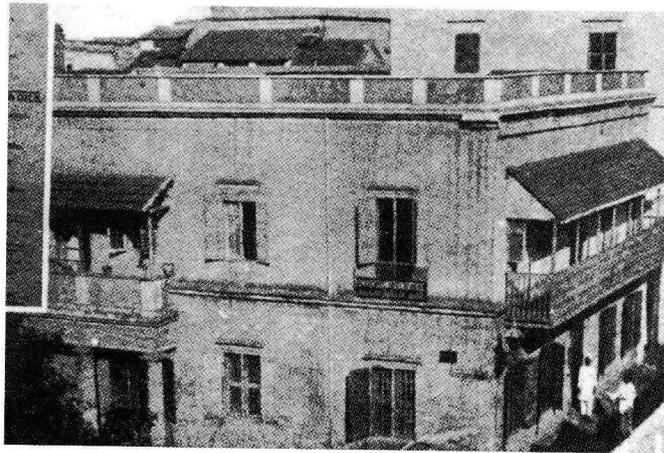
The front pages of The Hindu in 1881 (weekly), 1889 (daily), and 1905 (after S. Kasturiranga Iyengar took it over).

1907

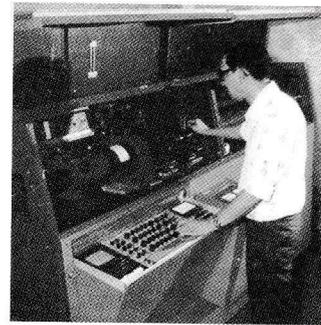
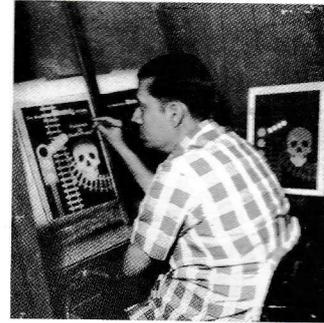
1910

1920

1923



The *Swadeshamitran's* masthead as it appeared in 1923; its office in Errabalu Chetty Street.



The photogravure process was first used in India by *The Illustrated Weekly of India*. Clockwise from left: colour negatives and positives are re-touched; colour is separated on a scanner; and colour is etched on the cylinder.

**1907:** Subramania Bharatiar's *Swadesa Geethangal* is published by Krishnaswami Iyer and distributed free to schools. In 1909, Bharatiar publishes *Janmabhumi* in Pondicherry. In Allahabad, *Modern Review*, edited by Ramananda Chatterjee, is published. Consisting of contributions from celebrated people and in-depth and forceful editorials, it makes a mark across India. Colourful reproduction of modern and medieval Indian masterpieces in painting are featured, a first. *The Statesman* installs an eight-unit Goss unit with two folders and a four-deck Goss press; 2- linotypes and two Ludlow machines, a rotary press and stereotyping equipment are installed.

**1910:** Ferozeshah Mehta founds *Bombay Chronicle*.

**1911:** *The Hitavada* is published from Nagpur.

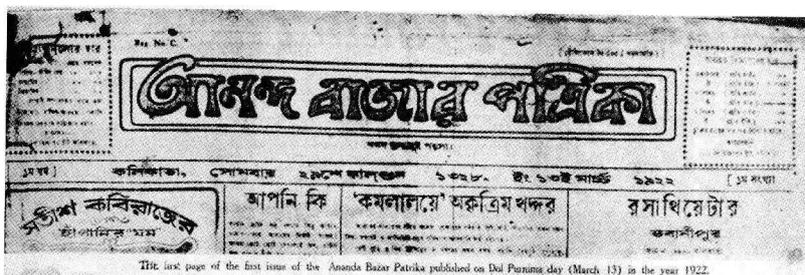
**1917:** The Government Central Press in Bombay introduces linotype composition.

**1920:** *The Hindu* installs the Ludlow machine, a variation of the handset type.

**1921:** *Madras Times* is amalgamated with *The Mail*. *The Mail*, Madras, introduces pictorial journalism. Most of *The Mail's* 16 pages carry pictures, one page is devoted entirely to them. A.A. Hayles, the editor, encourages staff to experiment with ink and metals and takes the initiative in importing the first ink-pump Hoe Rotary press.

**1922:** On March 13 (auspicious Dol Purnima Day), the *Ananda Bazar Patrika* is published from the Gauranga Press in Calcutta. It has a planned layout and its circulation is limited to the fullest capacity of the flatbed cylinder presses.

**1923:** The first copy of *Mathrubhumi*, a leading Malayalam daily, goes to press on March 18. The history of the paper is synonymous with the freedom movement in Kerala.



The last page of the first issue of the *Ananda Bazar Patrika* published on Dol Purnima day (March 13) in the year 1922.

The masthead of the *Ananda Bazar Patrika* as it appeared in the first issue of the paper, in 1922.

1924

**1924:** *The Hindustan Times* is founded; the first issue is published from Naya Bazaar, Delhi.

**1925:** The Lutheran Printing Press comes up in Vaniyambadi, Tamil Nadu.

**1926:** *Ananda Viketan*, a Tamil magazine, is started in Madras by S.S. Vasan, founder of Gemini Studios, as a humour magazine. It soon becomes a household name with its serialised novels, reviews of cultural events and witty comments on social mores and political life.

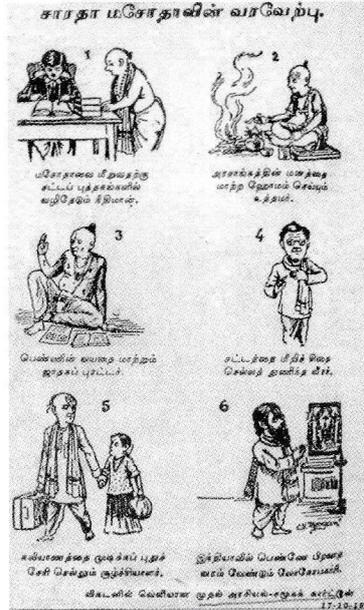
**1927:** *Tyaag Bhoomi* is launched in Rajasthan. Started as a monthly, it becomes one of the best edited nationalist magazines of the country. Its contributors include leaders like Nehru. The *Nataraj Riturangashala* and *Sahaj Path* pioneer a modern type of illustration for books – Nandalal Bose illustrates Rabindranath Tagore's writings.

**1930:** *The Free Press Journal* starts publication. The *Journal of the Music Academy* of Madras, a quarterly devoted to the advancement of the science and art of music, begins publication.

**1932:** The *Indian Express* begins publication in Madras (the Bombay edition starts in 1940, Delhi 1953, and Madurai 1957).

**1934:** *Dinamani*, a Tamil daily, is launched; *Janavani*, a Kannada daily, is published from Bangalore.

1934



Some of the cartoons that appeared in *Ananda Viketan*, a Tamil weekly.

1941

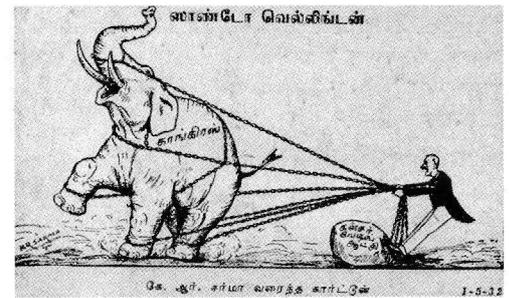
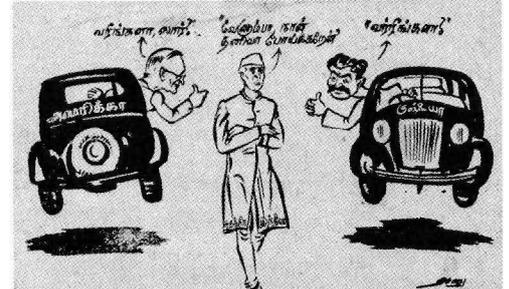
**1935:** Travancore has more than 160 print shops and 90 periodicals, including seven dailies and 20 weeklies.

**1936:** *Ananda Bazaar Patrika* designs the first Bengali lino-keyboard. Letters are reduced to 124 from 600.

**1938:** *Deccan Chronicle* starts publication from Secunderabad. *Andhra Prabha*, an Andhra publication, is started in Madras.

**1939:** The Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society is inaugurated at The Statesman House, New Delhi; becomes the Indian Newspaper Society after Independence.

1951



**1941:** The famous Tamil weekly, *Kalki*, is founded by R. Krishnamurthy. Fourteen of his novels, including *Parthiban Kanavu*, *Sivakamiyin Sabatham* and *Ponniyin Selvan* are published in the years following.

**1942:** *Dainik Jagran*, a Hindi daily, is published from Jhansi. *Thanthi*, a Tamil daily, is published from Madras, Madurai and Tiruchy. *Deshabhimani*, the newspaper of the Communist Party, is published from Kozhikode in the British-ruled district of Malabar. Although banned by the Madras Government in 1948, the paper returns in 1951, installs a rotary press in 1957, and starts a Cochin edition in 1968.

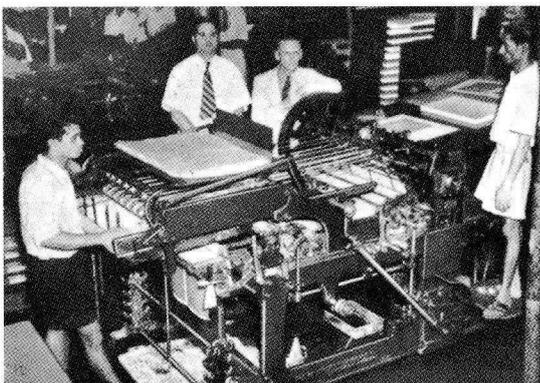
**1944:** Publications from Kalakshetra, Madras, appear.

**1947:** *Kumudam*, a Tamil magazine, commences publication.

**1948:** The *Deccan Herald* is published from Bangalore by the Printers (Mysore) Pvt. Ltd.

**1950:** The *Navbharat Times* is printed from Bombay and Delhi.

**1951:** *Dinamalar*, a Tamil daily, starts publication.



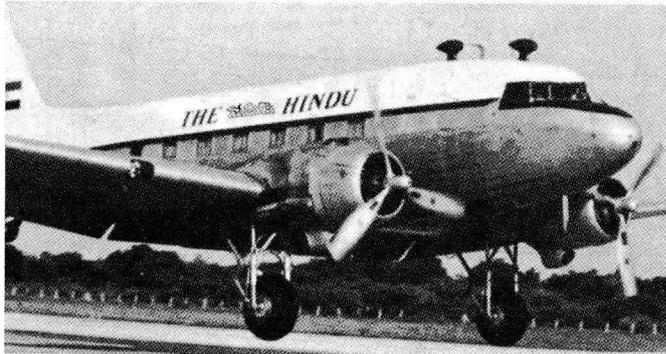
A two-colour letterpress at *The Times of India*, which then had no fewer than 68 letterpress machines.

1952

1963

1970

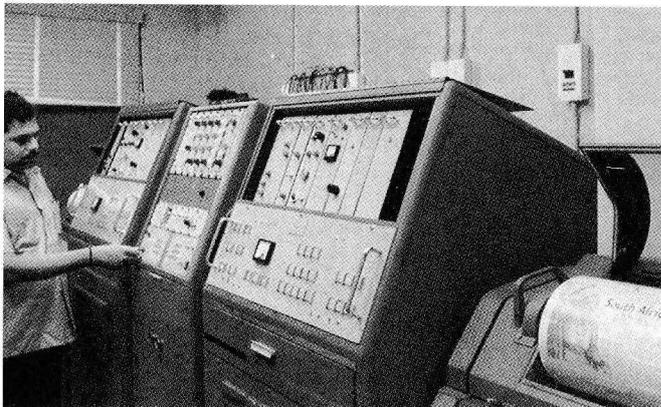
1980



*The Hindu's* own aircraft that once carried copies to readers in South India, 1963 onwards.



*The Hindu* was the first mainline newspaper to introduce a computer-aided photo composing system in 1980.



*The Hindu* became the first Indian newspaper in 1969 to introduce the facsimile edition.

**1952:** The Madras Printers' and Lithographers' Association is established after representatives of 15 commercial printing establishments in Madras meet and form the first association of printers in South India.

**1953:** The All India Federation of Master Printers' Associations is established after the MPLA invites representatives from printers associations from other parts of India to Madras.

**1955:** *Chandamama*, a children's monthly, is launched in Madras. The Indian Parliament passes the Working Journalist Act; the first Wage Board is constituted the following year.

**1956:** The *Rajasthan Patrika*, a Hindi language daily, is published from Jaipur.

**1963:** *The Hindu* becomes the first Indian newspaper to acquire and operate its own aircraft for carrying copies to readers in different parts of South India.

**1969:** *The Hindu* becomes the first Indian daily to introduce a facsimile system, a process by which newspaper pages are transmitted electronically to its different regional offices (Coimbatore, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Madurai) to be printed independently at each centre. Both transmitters and receivers are drum-type analogue machines based on valve electronic circuits. Transmission of a broadsheet page takes nine minutes. What is transmitted is a page proof on glazed newsprint. The facsimile equipment is updated in 1984 with the acquisition of a digital laser flatbed scanner and LED drum recorders

**1970:** The rotary press gives way to the Web offset press.

**1976:** Newspaper circulation in South India touches 2.3 million, a growth of 400 percent over the past two decades. The installation of the first of the offset presses in Hyderabad enables *The Hindu* to show advertisers the impact of quality colour.

**1977:** *Dinakaran*, a Tamil daily, starts publication.

**1980:** *The Hindu* scores a first again – introduces computer-aided photocomposing. The first monotype Lasercomp imagesetters are installed.

## A whole new world opens out for print and media

When CNN brought home the Gulf War to millions of viewers in India in the early 1990s, many prophesied the beginning of the end of newspapers. Today, however, the newspaper industry is flourishing in India. It is the second largest in the world, after China. Between 2005 and 2006, more than 2000 newspapers were launched in India. The vernacular press is also growing rapidly; the country's largest selling papers are in Hindi – *Dainik Jagran* and *Dainik Bhaskar* together have a readership of 40 million! There are even collaborative efforts between publishers who are competitors – *Metro Now*, a collaborative effort between *The Times of India* and *Hindustan Times*, is an example. And to think that 350 million literate in India do not still buy a newspaper! A virgin market indeed.

While newspapers are getting more savvy, new products and services such as the Internet, Web audio and video, Weblogs and mobile phones are posing unprecedented challenges to the print media. With technology allowing the average person to capture news and distribute it globally, citizen journalists have arrived. The print media has been forced to adapt and change. Newspapers, for a start, are now beginning to equip their photographers with digital cameras. 'Convergence in the newsroom', a concept that has been successfully adopted by several leading newspapers in the developed world is yet to make a mark in India, though.

The arrival of the Internet in the early 1990s saw some Indian newspapers start their own Web sites. *The Hindu* became the first Indian newspaper in 1995 to offer an online edition. Times Internet Ltd., which handles the Group's Internet properties, runs [www.indiatimes.com](http://www.indiatimes.com), India's largest Web and e-commerce portal. An Internet and Mobile Association of India study reveals that the Internet user base in India grew by 54 percent to reach more than 38 million users in 2005; that number is likely to be 100 million now. The e-paper, the electronic counterpart of the printed newspaper, which most leading Indian newspapers offer today, are especially popular among NRIs living abroad.

Today's mobile revolution has brought the reader closer to the newspaper than ever before. Times Internet runs the popular 8888 service that is well connected to its print, television and FM channels. *Sakal*, a Marathi daily, provides a similar service, 4321, popular in the Pune region. *Dainik Jagran*, *Rajasthan Patrika*, *Hindustan Times*, *Indian Express* and other leading newspapers all have mobile media channels. The services include ring tones, picture messages, contests, stock market and sports updates, shopping information and downloads. An indication of how fast technology is growing can be judged by Nokia's recent association with *Malayala Manorama*. Their association has led to the launch of a 'vernacular news portal', a sort of 'mobile newspaper'. Users of Nokia GPRS-enabled handsets in Kerala now get national and international news in their native language, across categories such as sports, travel, music, astrology, and movies.

Several newspapers have ventured successfully into FM radio and television as well. Times Now and Zoom TV of The Times Group are examples, as is Manorama News recently launched by the Manorama Group. Channel 7 is a popular offering from the *Dainik Jagran* stable; the Eenadu Group-owned ETV has a large following in south India, as does Star Bangla TV, a joint venture between *Ananda Bazar Patrika* and Star TV, in the east. Bennett, Coleman and Co.'s Entertainment Network (India) operates Radio Mirchi, the popular FM radio channel, in several Indian cities. Mid-Day Multimedia, HT Media, and Synergy Media (Dainik Bhaskar Group) have all entered the FM radio segment.

There have been remarkable advancements in printing technology as well. In 1994, *The Hindu* became the first to adopt wholly computerised integration of text and graphics in page make-up and remote imaging. The 4-High tower presses are becoming popular in Indian newspapers. A combination of 4-high towers and 2-Y configurations are seen more in recent installations. In the past two or three years, several newspapers have made investments for expansion and modernisation of their existing facilities to meet growing circulation demand. Man Roland, Goss and Mitsubishi have commissioned plants for *The Times of India*, *Hindustan Times*, *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, *Deccan Chronicle* and *The Hindu*, with the Man Roland contract to provide *The Times of India* with the latest Colorman presses being one of the largest sales for the supplier in Asia.

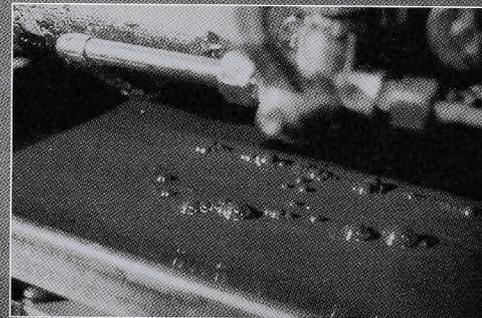
*The Hindu's* new sophisticated printing facility in Maraimalainagar, 45 km from Chennai, now has a Mitsubishi 4/1 press, with inline stitching and automatic blanket cleaning facility. The newspaper has also completed installation of a Nela plate conveying and handling system to automate its plate-making process. *Dainik Jagran*, India's largest circulated daily, recently ordered 17 lines of Nela's Benchmark V Vision benders for its sites throughout the country.

As newspaper and media publishers are desperate to retain readers and advertisers, and as suppliers to the industry compete with one another to sell the latest offering, the Indian printing and publishing industry can only grow and get better.

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