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Press Trust of India: India’s Largest News Agency

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Press Trust of India: India’s Largest News Agency

Most Indian news you read did not come from the newspaper’s own reporter. It likely came from one shared wire service, owned by the newspapers themselves.

> **27 Aug 1947** PTI incorporated in Madras.
> **1 Feb 1949** Full news operations began.
> **1953** Fully independent of Reuters.
> **450+** Newspapers that own it.

News agency: A wire service that sells news to many outlets.

Cooperative: Owned by its own members, the newspapers.

PTI-Bhasha: PTI’s Hindi-language news service.

Samachar: The state-run agency formed in 1976.

1 Chapter 1: India’s Largest News Agency

Must Know

What PTI is

- The Press Trust of India (PTI) is India’s largest news agency.

Incorporated in 1947

- PTI was incorporated in Madras on 27 August 1947.
- Kasturi Srinivasan of The Hindu was its founding chairman.

Operations began in 1949

- PTI began full news operations on 1 February 1949.
- It took over from the Associated Press of India.
- It became fully independent of Reuters in 1953.

A non-profit cooperative

- PTI is owned collectively by more than 450 Indian newspapers.
- Member newspapers are both owners and primary clients.
- They contribute capital through share subscriptions.

Base and clients

- Its headquarters is the PTI Building, on Parliament Street, New Delhi.
- It supplies news to The Times of India, The Hindu, Hindustan Times, Doordarshan and All India Radio.

Remember: Incorporated 27 Aug 1947. Operations 1 Feb 1949. Independent of Reuters 1953. Cooperative of 450+ newspapers.

> **Quick check 1.** PTI is a government-owned news agency. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

2 Chapter 2: Reach and the Emergency Merger

Good to Know

More than text

- PTI runs PTI-Bhasha, its Hindi-language news service.
- It also runs PTI Photo and PTI Graphics divisions.

Correspondents and offices

- It has around 400 part-time correspondents at Indian district headquarters, beyond its full-time staff.
- Its international offices include Bangkok, Beijing, Dubai, Moscow, New York, London and Washington D.C.
- In January 2022, PTI had over 500 full-time employees, including about 400 journalists.

The forced merger of 1976

- In February 1976, during the Emergency, the government forcibly merged PTI with three other agencies.
- They were United News of India, Hindustan Samachar and Samachar Bharati.
- The merged state-run agency was called Samachar.
- Samachar was widely criticised as an arm of government propaganda.
- When the Janata Party came to power in 1977, the merger was undone.
- PTI resumed independent news operations from April 1978.
- See The Emergency (1975-77) and Journalism in India.

> **Quick check 2.** PTI was forcibly merged into a state-run agency during the Emergency. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

3 Chapter 3: Exam Traps

Great to Know

Incorporation is not operations

- PTI was incorporated in 1947.
- But it began actual news operations only on 1 February 1949, after taking over from the Associated Press of India.

A cooperative, not a company

- PTI is not government-owned or a single-owner company.
- It belongs collectively to the newspapers that subscribe to it.
- The 1976 forced merger shows the government has not always respected this structure.
- Two of its major clients, Doordarshan and All India Radio, come under Prasar Bharati: India's Public Broadcaster.

1953, not 1947

- PTI's independence from Reuters came in 1953, four years after it began operating.
- It did not come at its 1947 founding.

- The two milestones are often mixed up.

> **Think it through: Why does a cooperative structure matter for a news agency?**
>
> If newspapers own it together, no single owner or government is meant to control the copy it sends out.

Quick Q&A

- **When was PTI incorporated?** 27 August 1947.
- **When did operations begin?** 1 February 1949.
- **Independent of Reuters?** 1953.
- **Who owns PTI?** Over 450 newspapers.
- **Emergency merger agency?** Samachar.

Practice MCQs

1. The Press Trust of India (PTI) was incorporated in Madras in which year?

A. 1949

B. 1935

C. 1947

D. 1953

See answer ↓

2. How is the Press Trust of India (PTI) structured as an organisation?

A. As a single-proprietor private company

B. As a non-profit cooperative, owned collectively by over 450 Indian newspapers

C. As a joint venture between the government and Reuters

D. As a government department under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

See answer ↓

3. When PTI began full news operations on 1 February 1949, which organisation's operations did it take over?

A. Doordarshan's news wing

B. The Indian News Chronicle

C. The Associated Press of India

D. The Bombay Chronicle Syndicate

See answer ↓

4. In what year did PTI become fully independent of Reuters, several years after it began operating?

A. 1947

B. 1949

C. 1953

D. 1965

See answer ↓

5. PTI's Hindi-language news service, launched during its 1980s modernisation, is known by which name?

A. PTI-Sandesh

B. PTI-Bhasha

C. PTI-Rashtriya

D. PTI-Hindustan

See answer ↓

6. When was the Press Trust of India (PTI) set up, and when did it begin full operations?

A. 27 August 1947, beginning operations in October 1947

B. 27 August 1947, beginning operations in February 1949

C. 15 August 1947, beginning operations in February 1949

D. 2 October 2008, beginning operations in February 1949

See answer ↓

Answer Key

1. **C.** PTI was incorporated on 27 August 1947, in Madras. ↑ Q1
2. **B.** PTI operates as a non-profit cooperative, owned collectively by more than 450 Indian newspapers, which are also its primary clients. ↑ Q2
3. **C.** PTI took over operations from the Associated Press of India, which had run under Reuters. ↑ Q3
4. **C.** PTI became fully independent of Reuters in 1953, four years after it began full operations in 1949. ↑ Q4
5. **B.** PTI-Bhasha is PTI's Hindi-language wire service, launched alongside other regional-language and photo services during its 1980s modernisation. ↑ Q5
6. **B.** PTI was set up in Madras on 27 August 1947, and began full operations in February 1949, after acquiring the Indian operations of Reuters' Associated Press of India. 2 October 2008 is when the broadcast self-regulator NBDSA became operational, a different body entirely. ↑ Q6

Quick-check answers

1. **False.** ↑ 1
2. **True.** ↑ 2

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