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onymous with 'Indian' (as had once been explained).

In 1958, there was a further change. The Gothic masthead was given up for a more modern, easier-to-read type. The simple new type, which continues to this day with some variation, is a harking back to what 'The Triplicane Six' had started out with. And so was front-paging the news. Advertising on the front page in the 19th century *Hindu* became a practice only a few months after the paper started.

A few other additions to keep up with the changing times were introduced in the newspaper during this era. Srinivasan's brother, Gopalan, Partner and also Publisher and Printer of the paper from 1927, was passionate about sport, particularly hockey, which he had played well in college. He had a hand in launching India's first sports magazine, *Sport and Pastime*, on September 10, 1947. It was to become one of India's favourite magazines until its demise in 1968. Gopalan also contributed towards making the paper's sports pages the best in the country — comprehensive and literate — which they remain today. The other new publication was *The Hindu Weekly Review*, launched in August 1953 to keep overseas readers in touch with the paper. Printed on 'airmail paper' to make economic use of air transport, it carried the most important news stories and best features and local pictures of the week. All these improvements to the paper and additions to The National Press stable were backed by appreciation of modern technology combined with close attention to the economics of the business.

In 1929, when the first Indian air mail plane landed at Karachi, it brought *The Hindu's* first "air mail stories" from London — 11 of them. Over the years, Srinivasan, who was fascinated by air transport, was to strengthen the paper's commitment to using aircraft directly in the news business. In 1938, *The Hindu* became the first newspaper in the country to have a teleprinter connection from the Central Telegraph Office to receive the news. By 1949, when greater use of teleprinter lines became feasible, *The Hindu* was the first paper to make use of the Government's offer, setting up its own link with Bombay and, then, with Delhi. Dedicated links to other cities were added later.

With communication becoming easier and faster, Srinivasan led *The Hindu* into taking a greater interest in the wider world. Frederick Grubb had from 1911 been *The Hindu's* London Correspondent, its first international reporter. When he retired in 1933, the newspaper opened in London its first overseas office, and Leonard Matters headed it. After World War II, *The Hindu* became one of the first Indian newspapers to have full-time correspondents in other countries. K. Balaraman went to New York in 1948 and was to stay there till 1961, establishing an enviable reputation of reporting the American scene racyly. He was to head the U.N. Correspondents' Association and the Foreign Correspondents' Association in the U.S. — the only Asian to do so till he left the country — and was once named the "Foreign Correspondent of the Year." K.V. Narain became the newspaper's correspondent in Tokyo, where an office was opened in 1957. There were correspondents of *The Hindu* in nearly a dozen countries.

Even as *The Hindu* reached out abroad, it expanded at home. With its circulation racing to 40,000 by the late 1930s, it needed larger premises. The Oakes' Mount Road workshop, owned by Spencer's,

and the considerable unutilised space around it, were on the market. On this three-acre site, Srinivasan entrusted the design of what was to be named "Kasturi Buildings" to H. Fellowes Prynne of Jackson and Barker, architects. The civil construction was contracted to the Modern Construction Company.

Srinivasan was determined to have *The Hindu* celebrate its Diamond Jubilee in its new home, but he had to overcome the challenge of shifting the paper's printing press and related facilities without interrupting production. The answer was a new rotary printing press. The machine *The Hindu* ordered was the most modern available at the time; it was capable of printing 32 pages at a time at a speed of 40,000 copies an hour. The new press also offered spot colour printing simultaneously on the run. *The Hindu* thus became the first in India to offer colour in a newspaper. "Kasturi Buildings" was ready for occupation and the press ready for use only in December 1939, so *The Hindu* celebrated its Diamond Jubilee, due in September 1938, only after it moved to the new premises that are now 859 and 860 Anna Salai.

100 Mount Road soon had a new tenant. When the George Town office of *The Indian Express*, owned by Ramnath Goenka, was gutted by fire in 1940, Srinivasan lent *The Hindu's* old home and old rotary to the *Express*, even as the fire raged. *The Indian Express* remained

a tenant there until it moved into its own premises in 1948 after buying the old Madras Club building and campus. 100 Mount Road became progressively a monument to neglect till *The Hindu*, in a rush of insensitivity to heritage, pulled it down in 1996 to develop a high-rise building. The only fortuitous good that came of it was that "Kasturi Centre" now houses the Asian College of Journalism (ACJ); two of *The Hindu's* directors are trustees of the Media Development Foundation, the independent public trust that runs the ACJ.

Srinivasan was to display his generosity to competitors once again when, in October 1943, after rains had battered the city and left it flooded, he offered to print the newspaper of any publisher who had been affected by the power breakdown that had followed. During this crisis, *The Hindu's* AC power supply alone was restored quickly, as it was from the main power station. It is worth noting that Srinivasan made this offer when his own newspaper was suffering from the consequences of the War: reduced to half its circulation and four pages on five days and six pages on two days.

The Hindu celebrated its Diamond Jubilee in style — affirming its faith in democracy and "free discussion that is the life breath of democracy" and belief in its own educational role. It felt that, abroad, the masses were "educated enough to read greedily but not...

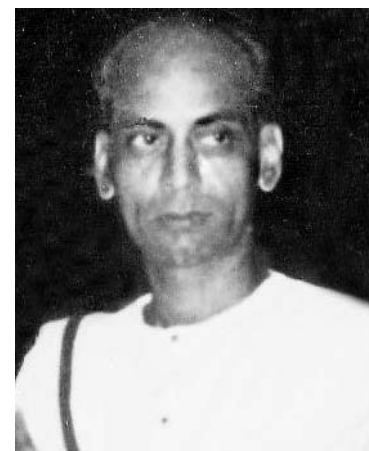
seriously" — thus "swamping the discriminating few" — and felt this should not happen in India. "It is not by bludgeoning the reader's mind," the paper contended, "but by reasoning with it that the soundest and most lasting results can be achieved." Stating that the pros and cons must be set out fairly and that it was incumbent on the Press "to maintain steadily this appeal to higher instincts," *The Hindu* eschewed the option of becoming a 'popular' paper — "a tabloid". It felt news should not be sensationalised but must be presented "in a well ordered manner... each item in its appointed place." Although it spoke slightly of "so called human interest stories and similar shop window devices," the paper was not above offering extensive coverage of sport, especially cricket and horse racing and even had a correspondent writing regularly on fashion at the races. In the pre-television era, *The Hindu* set up a large scoreboard in the front of its office during Test matches. It once devoted columns of space over two months to a controversy that posed the question, "Did Sita, Rama's consort, lie and if so was it pardonable?" Like its original role model, *The Times*, London, *The Hindu* did not believe in personalising news by such popular devices as by-lines and photographs of correspondents. There was a sensation when T.G. Narayanan got a by-line — and a picture too — for his war reports from the Imphal front in April 1944.

Reflecting the importance of views and opinion, *The Hindu* had Assistant Editors and sub-editors, but not a News Editor until the War years when C.R. Krishnaswami, Rajaji's son, was put in charge of news operations in the modern sense. The paper, however, had got its first Chief Reporter in 1905 — R. Ganesa Aiyer, a Kasturi Ranga Iyengar appointment who remained in harness for 23 years. The attitude of these dedicated journalists was that the news must be presented as comprehensively and as unsensationally as possible and that all the facts at hand must be included — after checking and re-checking.

Some of *The Hindu's* most noteworthy achievements during this era came as much by good organisation as by chance. The newspaper carried news of the Japanese surrender when most of the country's other morning dailies (including *The Times of India*) missed the story. This 'exclusive' for India was possible only because a stenographer was posted to monitor radio bulletins every night during the War. He had conscientiously tuned in to the BBC for a last check at 4.30 am before going home, when printing of the first edition was under way — and what he heard had *The Hindu* ahead of the rest. During a later era, in 1966, the paper scooped Lal Bahadur Shastri's death, carrying the story in the same issue that carried news of the Tashkent Accord. In this instance, all the sub-editors had gone home but a teleprinter operator, who spotted the news, and a proof-reader informed Kasturi. The Editor stopped press and had the 'flash' carried. Then there was the case of Kennedy's assassination in 1963, the news breaking in India minutes after the first edition of *The Hindu* was airborne. The air fleet — a pioneering venture — was recalled and a new edition was hurriedly printed and airlifted to readers in far-flung parts of south India.

Such splendid organisation, which could convert even a half-chance into an "exclusive", coupled with rare business acumen that has been demonstrated in every generation of the Kasturi family — not usually found among press barons, leave alone journalists — is what has taken *The Hindu* from strength to strength, especially in the post-Independence years when it did not have the "nationalist" label any longer to help boost its sales. The circulation grew from 50,000 in 1955 to 100,000 in 1959 to nearly a million today. This growth is testimony to the organisational skills of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's sons and their successors.

The end of the Srinivasan era came in rather unhappy circumstances. Of Srinivasan it has been said — as was later said of G. Kasturi — that there was not a single detail in the organisation of a modern newspaper with which he was not familiar. Whether it was maintaining the traditions of the institution, news operations, editorial practices, dealing with officialdom, setting up of an index department, putting up a new building, ordering a new plant, responding to production crises, or opening an office in New



S. Parthasarathy ("S.P.")

York, Srinivasan familiarised himself with both the details and the issues involved and made informed, forward-looking decisions. It was remarkable with what unerring shrewdness and judgment he made major decisions involving outlays that were large for his time.

For all his strictness, he was generous with his staff. When pages were drastically reduced during the War, he did not retrench staff. Instead, as prices rose, he became the first newspaper employer in the country to pay a cost of living allowance. He also opened a fair price grain shop as well as a staff canteen — additional measures to reduce the burden on a staff saddled with steep rises in the cost of living. Work, however, he expected to be turned out to his high standards. He continued to respect *The Hindu* tradition of not asking an editorial writer to write against his convictions, but anyone who erred editorially or was considered undisciplined was sternly dealt with. Dismissal in the old autocratic tradition was not unknown. It was against such a background that the paper's first trade union, founded in 1957, launched the first strike in *The Hindu's* history — on July 29, 1958. With the management taking an unrelenting stand and the strike turning militant, the situation got out of hand. On August 5, the paper closed its doors for the first time since it was launched. A week later, after Chief Minister Kamara's intervention and a statement of regret from the striking workers, *The Hindu* was back in business with a weary comment on the consequences of labour organisations getting mixed up with political parties.

The paper recovered its health fairly quickly but its great Editor, shattered by what had happened, his paternalism unable to absorb the shock of his men 'turning on him', went into a decline of health and spirits. In less than a year, he was dead — at the age of 72.

5. Into the Present

DEVELOPING A PAPER FOR A NEW READER

WITH the death of Kasturi Srinivasan who was very much in charge of everything at *The Hindu*, there was bound to be considerable change in style in the management of the organisation. Without that dominant personality around, there was likely to be a greater tendency to management by committee. A second blow to the family-run institution came in February 1961 with the untimely death of his elder son, the affable and popular S. Parthasarathy, who was in charge of the Sunday magazine and had also become Publisher of the newspaper in 1959.

Kasturi Gopalan, Srinivasan's younger brother, was Printer and Publisher of the newspaper for close to half a century. As long as *The Hindu* continued to do justice to his passion, sport, above all hockey, and the daily religious discourse he had introduced, he was content to let others guide the destiny of the organisation. But that was not to say he withdrew from the paper. One of the longest office attendance and punctuality records anywhere was his. From 1913 till his death in 1974, he arrived at the office every day right on the dot and spent several hours in it. He was convinced that an orthodox life was perfectly compatible with a modern and progressive outlook in a variety of ways. Duty and devotion to the National Press and the family was what he aimed to demonstrate with punctiliousness in the office and observance of rituals elsewhere.

Gopalan's elder son, G. Narasimhan, was General Manager of *The Hindu* from 1937 and succeeded Srinivasan as Managing Editor and Managing Director. A retiring man who did not seek the limelight, he was the ideal committee chairman, able to lead discussions and, with his fine logical mind, point out discrepancies, omissions and commissions. The courteous and patient Narasimhan proved popular. He was considered such a benevolent employer that it came as a surprise when *The Hindu* had its second and third major labour problems in 1967 and 1968, but when the situation returned to normal, there was the unflinching Narasimhan committing himself calmly to restoring the confidence of the employees. A clubbable man, he had a life-long passion for Carnatic music — bequeathing to the Music

Academy in Madras a unique collection of tape recordings of all the outstanding musicians of his time — and a deep interest in sports such as horse racing, billiards and golf, which he played himself and quietly promoted. His death in 1977, when only 61, left behind a comparatively young family. His sons Ram and Ravi were in the Editorial Department and Murali was in management, becoming General Manager in 1977.

With Narasimhan as Managing Editor, it was judged prudent to have an editor with long journalistic experience. So an older person, a cousin of Srinivasan, S. Parthasarathy, was named and Narasimhan's brother, Kasturi, appointed Joint Editor. Parthasarathy — S.P. as he was called — was a self-effacing person, yet was more knowledgeable about men and matters of the time than anyone else in the paper. As Senior sub-editor and, later, as the first recognised News Editor of the paper, he trained a couple of generations of journalists in *The Hindu* to respect accuracy and language. They, in turn, saw in him a sympathetic father figure to whom they could turn when in difficulty. He believed editorials should be notable not only for their language but also for their ability to see all sides of an issue. His advocacy of the people's cause during Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar's dewanship in Travancore and his defence of India on the Kashmir issue were well appreciated throughout the country. Considered an expert on Pakistan, he would, at editorial conferences, forcefully argue Pakistan's case and, then, with an array of facts and a display of incisive logic, demolish it and arrive at what he was going to say in his next editorial. He was the quintessential newspaperman who felt that if you were well informed and acquainted with varying points of view, you would be able to work out for yourself the just view.

It was during S.P.'s stewardship that India first faced war crises that threatened the security of the country and generated throughout the nation a hysterical call to arms. But *The Hindu* presented cogently argued cases and stressed negotiation and reorganisation. Backing India's position on the "inviolability" of the MacMahon line, the paper commented: "China must choose between friendship with India and mere acquisition of territory of which she has enough and more already." In the wake of the Sino-Indian boundary conflict of October 1962, *The Hindu* editorialised that India had "done... [its] best to avoid a war" and could "negotiate only on honourable terms and not when our soil is being increasingly occupied by the Chinese."

When Prime Minister Nehru died in May 1964, *The Hindu*, which had begun to be disappointed in him, remembered him handsomely: "Child of the Indian Revolution... leadership came naturally to him and he proved himself a man of the masses almost from the time he plunged into the non-cooperation movement... It is given to few leaders to achieve in their lifetime all that they set out to accomplish in their youth. Jawaharlal must be deemed exceptionally fortunate in this respect because he did achieve a great many things in a life of crowded activity... He has a secure place in history as a great national leader who used his high prestige and influence among the nations in the cause of world peace and international understanding. His greatest achievement undoubtedly is the fact that despite the horrors of Partition and the surge of communal passions and linguistic loyalties he kept India united within a democratic secular framework and set her firmly on the road to economic development and modernisation."

The second war crisis came with Ayub Khan, the military dictator, leading Pakistan. When Ayub Khan declared war on India, *The Hindu* wondered whether it was "a gambler's throw." Looking at what India was faced with, *The Hindu* commented ruefully: "For us in India grave times are ahead. A truculent neighbour, encouraged by the arms it has received from the West and the arrogance born of new-found friendship with other enemies of peace has thrown a challenge which must be accepted calmly and courageously. It is a terrible experience for a peace-loving democratic people, engaged in the building up of their national economy and raising living standards to be called upon to divert their energies to military activity and to resist an unscrupulous and well-armed enemy."

The moderate tone that Kasturi Srinivasan had brought to *The Hindu* was being echoed by S.P. He was, in the commitment to reasoned argument, to be followed by G. Kasturi when he became Editor in September 1965. He had been working closely with his uncle and the various outstanding journalists who served the newspaper. A keen sportsman, who showed a flair for both tennis and cricket, he gave up these pursuits in single-minded dedication to the newspaper. Much of Kasturi's time was spent on finding ways and means to reach *The Hindu* not only to the largest number of readers in the south but also to make it reach fur-



Rajendra Prasad's carriage passes in front of Kasturi Buildings, August 15, 1956. The building to the left is the office of *The Mail*.