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PRESS RELEASE

CAPACITY CLAIMS AND QUALITY GAPS IN DOMESTIC NEWSPRINT

New Delhi, 10th March 2026: On behalf of The Indian Newspaper Society (INS), Mr. Vivek Gupta, President-INS expresses serious concern regarding the current situation of domestic newsprint in the country.

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), in its report for 2024 - 25, has indicated that the domestic newsprint industry claims the existence of 123 newsprint mills with an installed capacity of approximately 2.2 million tonnes per annum. However, actual production figures reveal that capacity utilisation remains significantly below these claims, thereby challenging assertions of adequate domestic availability of newsprint. Beyond quantity, quality remains an important concern for the print media industry.

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), under Newsprint Specification (Second Revision), published in December 2022, classifies newsprint into Grade 1 and Grade 2, based on physical, optical, mechanical, and surface parameters. While both grades are BIS compliant, yet they are not operationally equivalent.

Grade 1, predominantly is equivalent to imported newsprint, represents a superior quality benchmark and is broadly aligned with international standards. Its key characteristics include Higher brightness (enabling sharper text and clear image reproduction), Improved surface smoothness (essential for consistent ink lay), Higher tensile and tear strength (ensuring stability on high-speed printing presses), and controlled porosity (reducing ink spread and show-through). These properties make Grade 1 newsprint more compatible with modern hi-speed newspaper printing operations.

Grade 2 newsprint broadly corresponds to domestically manufactured newsprint. While technically compliant with minimum BIS thresholds, it suffers from significant operational limitations, including lower and inconsistent brightness levels, Inferior surface smoothness (leading to ink feathering and dot gain), Reduced mechanical strength (resulting in frequent web breaks) and Irregular porosity (causing higher ink consumption and print inconsistency). Therefore, Grade 2 newsprint results in higher wastage of paper and ink, slower press speeds by frequent stoppages which causes delay in delivery schedules. Hence, it does not reliably meet the requirements of modern hi-speed printing presses.

The comparison of technical specifications of Grades 1 & 2 are tabulated below clearly shows that Grade 2 is significantly inferior in quality to Grade 1:



THE INDIAN NEWSPAPER SOCIETY

Sl. No.	Characteristics	Grade 1	Grade 2
1	Brightness ISO, percent, Min	55	52
2	Smoothness (<u>Bendsten</u>), ml/min, Max		
	Top Side	200	250
	Wire Side	250	300
3	Porosity, ml/min, Max	500	700
4	Tensile index, <u>N.m/g</u> , Min		
	CD	18	16
	MD	46	37
5	Tearing Index, CD, Mn.m ² /g, Min	5.0	4.5
6	Opacity, percent, Min	90	90

A review of BIS standards also indicates that the Grade 2 standard continues to be minimum-threshold oriented rather than performance-driven. In other words, the standard answers the question "Is the paper acceptable at a basic level?" but not "Is the paper suitable for modern newspaper printing operations?".

Hon'ble Minister of Commerce & Industry, Shri Piyush Goyal Ji has stated that "our standards should not be less than the global standards and if they are below those standards then they should be upgraded". Recently, he further mentioned that "harmonising global standards not only enhances product quality but also facilitates free trade, open markets, and such initiatives will help expand open markets, and provide a level playing field for businesses".

These statements reaffirm the concerns of the print media industry, thus far, that the existing quality and standards of domestic newsprint do not meet the requirements of the Indian Publishers, by and large.

The issue confronting Indian publishers is not merely capacity, but of availability of globally acceptable, press-compatible quality newsprint. Until domestic manufacturing capabilities are upgraded to consistently meet the international benchmarks, imports of newsprint will remain essential for ensuring quality, efficiency, and timely newspaper production in India.

Mary Paul
Secretary General

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