ChatGPT

Surya OCR vs Sarvam Vision – In-Depth Comparison

Accuracy and Benchmarks

- **Surya OCR (open-source)**: Benchmarks show Surya achieves very high OCR quality. In tests, Surya's output had **~97% similarity** to ground truth vs Tesseract's 88% [1]. On multilingual PDFs, Surya detects text lines with ~0.84 precision and 0.96 recall [2]. An independent study on Indic documents notes Surya supports many Indic scripts [3], though its word-error rates (20–30% in sample tests [4]) are higher than some specialized models.
- **Sarvam Vision (proprietary)**: Sarvam reports extremely high accuracy on Indian languages. For example, **Hindi 95.91%** word accuracy [5] (implying ~4% word error) and **Tamil 93.42%**. Its English OCR accuracy on a standard benchmark was **84.3%** [6], outperforming Google Gemini and GPT-5. These figures come from Sarvam's own evaluation. In the same ArXiv study [3], Sarvam is cited as a state-of-the-art closed-source system for Indic OCR. *No independent CER/WER values are publicly available for Sarvam.*

Language & Feature Support

- **Surya**: Supports **90+ languages** (global coverage) [7], including all major Indian scripts (Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, etc., as shown in examples [8]). It offers **layout analysis, table detection, and reading-order** out-of-box [7] [9]. For instance, on PubLayNet (scientific document layouts), Surya attained ~0.85–0.93 precision/recall across tables, images, text blocks [9].
- **Sarvam**: Specializes in **23 languages** (22 Indian + English) [10]. Its focus is on **government and enterprise documents**, with OCR plus form/table interpretation. Sarvam produces structured outputs (HTML/Markdown) preserving layout [11]. It does not list as many languages as Surya, but covers all official Indian scripts. It presumably also handles tables and forms well, though exact metrics are not published.

Performance (Speed & Deployment)

- **Surya**: Designed for high throughput on modern hardware. On a GPU (NVIDIA A10), Surya processes text lines in **~0.09s per page** [2] and full layouts in ~0.13s per page [9]. It can also run on CPUs, but slower. Surya's performance scales with GPU power, allowing batch processing of hundreds of pages/minute.
- **Sarvam**: Performance figures are not published. Given its 3-billion parameter VLM [12], one might expect higher latency per page unless heavily scaled. Sarvam is offered as a **cloud/SaaS service** (with an enterprise on-prem option [13]). The company claims consistent processing speeds and high uptime [14], but no concrete pages-per-second is provided.

Deployment & Licensing

- **Surya**: Fully **open-source (GPL)** [15]. Organizations can self-host on any infrastructure (cloud or on-prem), ensuring full data control. Installation requires Python/PyTorch. There are no licensing costs, though a commercial license is offered by Datalab for usage beyond GPL restrictions.
- **Sarvam**: **Proprietary** platform. Uses Sarvam's cloud API (JSON/HTML output) [11] or an enterprise on-prem appliance [13]. No price list is public; likely a pay-per-use or subscription model. Sarvam is SOC2 and ISO certified [16], addressing enterprise security requirements.

Community & Credibility

- **Surya**: Has a **vibrant community** – GitHub shows **19.3k stars, 1.3k forks** [17], and active development. It is cited in recent research (Krutrim AI 2026) as a key open-source OCR for Indic scripts [3]. User feedback (GitHub issues, forums) highlights its high accuracy and speed, though it requires suitable hardware.
- **Sarvam**: A well-funded startup (>$41M raised) [18]. Press coverage (Business Standard, TechCrunch) praises its Indic OCR accuracy [6] [5]. It has government partnerships (Odisha, Tamil Nadu) [19]. However, its performance claims are self-reported; no independent benchmarks exist yet. As a closed solution, there is less public scrutiny of its shortcomings.

Summary & Recommendation

- **Strengths of Surya**: Open, flexible, and high-performance on modern hardware. Broad language support and advanced layout/table features [7] [9]. Transparent and community-vetted (19k stars) [17]. Cost-effective (no license fees).
- **Strengths of Sarvam**: Specialized for Indian government documents. Excellent reported accuracy on Indic text [5]. Fully managed SaaS with enterprise-grade compliance (ISO/SOC2) [16]. Minimal setup effort for users.
- **Trade-offs**: Surya demands in-house ML/IT expertise to deploy and tune. Sarvam requires vendor lock-in and payment but offloads maintenance. In purely technical terms, Surya's raw accuracy is very high (competitive with cloud APIs) [20], while Sarvam claims top marks on domain-specific text [5].
- **Which is "better"?** It depends on priorities. For maximum control, open standards, and low cost, **Surya OCR** is superior. For turnkey deployment and possibly higher accuracy on certain Indian languages, **Sarvam Vision** may be preferable. Both are at the cutting edge: academic research lists Surya and Sarvam as leading Indic OCR systems [3]. We recommend evaluating both on your specific documents, but lean towards Surya if you value openness and scalability, and towards Sarvam if you need a ready-made enterprise solution with local language focus.

Sources

- Surya official GitHub (readme, benchmarks) [7] [20] [9] [17]
- Sarvam Vision reports and documentation [5] [6] [10] [19] [16]
- Independent research (Krutrim AI 2026, arXiv) [3] (mentioning Surya & Sarvam)

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