

From the President



My dear Professional Colleagues,

While our Government has always been ready to take up all possible dynamic, innovative and futuristic measures to boost our national economy in the best interests of our nation, we Chartered Accountants are also equally committed towards our nation. We constantly keep playing on priority the desired role of partners-in-nation-building as well as contributing to the economic health of our nation. ICAI past President CA. C. P. Mukherjee had proclaimed in 1961: *The state of the national economy is of special interest to the Chartered Accountant. The fortunes of his clients are closely connected with the level of economic activity.*

Whatever we decide to do in life, our sincerity and dedication towards our chosen profession is what makes us stand out from others, since we Chartered Accountants would never avoid our foundations in integrity and accountability. I sincerely believe that CA professionals will keep on discharging their professional obligations with absolute diligence, pushing forward the economic agenda of our nation and playing the role of both *saints and sages* of the Indian economy. Realising its responsibility to contribute to the growth of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, ICAI has recently decided to open its Representative Office covering the two jurisdictions, which will be our tool for social empowerment since this will facilitate in spreading awareness about the CA Course.

What the then ICAI President CA. M. P. Chitale had said in 1966, still holds true and pertinent: *We, Chartered Accountants, should be on the front in this plan of economic independence. After all, measurement of productivity and profitability and increasing the efficiency of organisation through improved accounting techniques is pre-eminently the task of Chartered Accountants...the strength of a profession does not depend on mere expertise, or skill, or technical competence of its members...Prestige and dignity of the profession is determined by the restless urge of its members, by their*

will to apply their knowledge and experience in solution of current social and economic problems. As members of the CA community, we will remain guided by this wisdom.

Now let me bring some of the most important professional developments that have taken place in the last one month:

We Lost a True Friend, Philosopher and Guide in Shri Arun Jaitley

An icon of Indian polity and former Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Shri Arun Jaitley left us for heavenly abode on 24th August 2019, and in him ICAI has lost a true friend, philosopher and guide. Being a proponent of ICAI's integral and enabling role in national economy, Shri Jaitley had always been supportive of our endeavours. He had extensively shared our platform on a number of occasions offering his guidance and vision. With his untimely demise, a void has been created which is hard to fill. On behalf of Indian accountancy profession, I pay my heartfelt tribute to the great leader and pray that the noble soul rests in peace.

New Government nominee from MCA

I am delighted to inform that the Ministry of Corporate Affairs has communicated us about the nomination of MCA Joint Secretary Shri Manoj Pandey on the ICAI Council for the current term succeeding Shri Anurag Agarwal, previous Joint Secretary of MCA. We welcome Shri Manoj Pandey and are confident that the Council will benefit from his rich experience and valuable insight. On behalf of the Council, I also wish to place on record our sincere appreciations and gratitude for the constant support and guidance that we received from Shri Anurag Agarwal in the matters of Council, especially relating to the GST Account Assistant Scheme.

ICAI International Conference in December 2019

I am glad to inform that we have decided to hold the next International Conference of ICAI on *Accountancy Profession: Catalysing Reforms, Creating Values*, on 6th-7th December 2019 in Mumbai. It may appear premature, but I would request all my professional colleagues to block these dates now and plan their visit to Mumbai to actively participate in the Conference and make that a grand success.

Management Development Programme for Newly-Qualified CAs

ICAI in collaboration with Manipal Global Education has developed a customised 23-day residential *Management Development Programme* which is being organised from 22nd August - 13th September 2019, to ensure professional grooming of the rank-holders and develop various managerial and leadership skills in them. This

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will be followed by a *Special Placement Programme* for the participants of this programme, in which reputed organisations would participate in addition to regular campus. I request my professional colleagues to help me in popularising the programme.

As part of the 50th Campus Placement programme, interviews have been scheduled in September-October 2019 in 18 cities across the country. To prepare the newly-qualified CAs for their employment, mock interviews and group discussions have also been scheduled on 3rd-7th September 2019 in those cities.

Concerns Submitted to Union Finance Minister regarding Definition of Accountant in Income-tax Act, 1961

Recently, the Institute of Cost Accountants of India and the Institute of Company Secretaries of India have submitted representations to the Government requesting for an amendment in the definition of term '*Accountant*' in the Explanation to Section 288(2) of the Income-tax Act, 1961. Taking note of this development, we have submitted our detailed concerns in respect of the same to the Union Finance Minister vide separate letters. We have mentioned that the role of an "accountant" as defined under section 288 should continue to be restricted exclusively to chartered accountants in practice, who alone possess the requisite professional competence to perform the said role efficiently and effectively.

ICAI Initiatives Appreciated at SAFA

As you may be aware, appreciating the Unique Document Identification Number (UDIN) initiative that ICAI has introduced to safeguard its members from misrepresentation by miscreants *vis-à-vis* the attestation of financial documents/ certificates, SAFA has formed a taskforce to implement the UDIN in SAFA member bodies. First meeting of this taskforce was held in Colombo where my Council colleague CA. Ranjeet Kumar Agarwal gave a detailed presentation on UDIN as Chairman of the taskforce. I am pleased to inform that ICAI Bangladesh, ICA Pakistan & ICA Nepal have requested for the technical assistance of ICAI to implement UDIN in their respective member bodies. As on date more than 25 lakh UDINs have already been generated.

In the SAFA Board Meeting held in Colombo, ICAI Vice President CA Atul Kumar Gupta gave a presentation on *ICAI e-Learning Platform* and informed that SAFA's request has been accepted and the members in good standing of the SAFA Member Bodies would be offered the portal at a token fee of USD 1 per annum, against the normal fee of USD 200 per annum. SAFA Board has appreciated the ICAI's gesture. It has been decided to form a Committee on Information Technology under the Chairmanship of ICAI which will address the impact of technological advancement on the accountancy profession.

Renewal of MRA between ICAI & CPA Australia

As qualification reciprocity arrangement between ICAI and CPA Australia regarding qualification expires in the coming month, it is satisfying to inform that a delegation from CPA Australia had visited ICAI proposing to renew the agreement on the existing terms.

Developments in GST

e-Invoice under GST: GST Council has decided to introduce electronic invoice on voluntary basis from January 2020. In this regard based on the request received, ICAI has supported the Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) in drafting an e-invoice *template*, which also takes into account the requirement of tax laws, having the features required for international trade.

Survey on GST Implementation in India: It has been two years since the most ambitious taxation reform, i.e. GST, was implemented in India. After the initial hiccup, the industries have started showing the signs of stabilization. Therefore, it has been deemed fit to conduct a survey on the entire gamut of GST to assess the achievement, glitches and areas that needs attention for going forward. I request my professional colleagues to give their feedback, since this would help in making the GST system a more robust, simple, fair and transparent law that would improve the ease of doing business and facilitate trade.

Representation for extending date for filing GST Annual Return and Audit

GST Annual Return and Audit: ICAI had submitted a representation to the Government on 21st August 2019 to extend the due date of filing GST annual return and audit by three months, i.e. till November 2019, since the taxpayers were facing difficulties in filing the same. I am happy to inform that the last date for furnishing the annual return has been extended to 30th November 2019.

Building and Strengthening Ties

Regional Meet of Members in Public Service: I am happy to inform that we recently organised a regional meet of our members in Public Service in New Delhi, with an objective to enable an interface between ICAI and them, and to attain the leverage of their vision and insight in enhancing our professional efficacy and explore avenues and opportunities for our members. The views exchanged during the regional meet will help us to further strengthen the image of accountancy profession.

Meeting with officials of NABARD & IBA: Recently my Central Council Colleagues CA. Jay Chhaira and CA. Prakash Sharma had meetings with the officials of NABARD and IBA. In NABARD, the issues relating to the fee revision of the Audit Fee of RRBs, concerns relating to audit, inspection report, LFAR and auditors' qualification and adherence to Accounting Standards etc. were discussed.

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With IBA, ICAI will be presenting a demonstration to all the banks on the Software developed by ICAI for the selection and allotment of Bank Branch Auditors to create awareness so that maximum banks may use the software for selection and allotment.

Understanding and e-filing Income Tax Return Forms

As it is known, the Income-tax Department had made significant changes in the ITR forms applicable for the AY 2019-20. To facilitate our members in discharging their professional duties in more effective manner, ICAI had organised a webcast on *Understanding and e-filing Income Tax Return Forms* in July 2019, which was addressed by the officials of CBDT. Arising from the deliberations over the webcast, CBDT issued a clarification in the form of FAQs in respect of various issues in filing of ITR forms for AY 2019-20; FAQs are based on the queries raised by our members during the webcast. CBDT has also issued a comprehensive checklist (instructions) to assist the taxpayers in submitting the ITR Form No. 7.

Representation in E-Assessments Set Up by CBDT

While the Government is committed to introduce faceless assessments, Union Finance Minister, including the Prime Minister too, has repeatedly highlighted this as the biggest procedural reform in their addresses to various industry associations. CBDT has set up a committee to evaluate the Data Structure and Modalities of Upload of Data for E-Assessments.

My Council colleague CA. N. C. Hegde has been invited to be part of that Committee. Direct Tax Committee of the Institute will be proactively providing comments on the E-Assessments.

ICAI Awards for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the Year 2018-19

Continuing with the tradition of bringing out the Awards for Excellence in Financial Reporting since last five decades, Research Committee of ICAI has announced the annual completion for the year 2018-19 and the last for applying for the said competition is September 30, 2019. The other details are available on the website of the Institute www.icai.org. Members may bring this to the notice of the Corporates with which they are associated/ working so that more and more companies can participate.

Results of Examinations Declared

Results of CA Final Examination (Old & New Syllabus), Intermediate Examination (Old & New Course), and Foundation Examination held in May 2019 have been declared.

I congratulate Mr. Ajay Agarwal from Kotputli (Rajasthan) and Mr. Nayan Goyal from Bhopal for

achieving first rank in the Final Examinations Old and New Course respectively held in May 2019. I also congratulate Mr. Abhinav Prakash Mishra from Kolkata and Mr. Shripal P. Doshi from Mumbai for sharing the first rank in the Intermediate (Old) Examinations, and to Mr. Akshat Goyal from Jaipur for achieving the first rank in the Intermediate (New) Examinations. Also, Mr. Rajat Sachin Rathi from Pune has achieved the first rank in the Foundation Examinations held in May 2019.

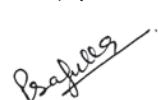
While I congratulate all successful candidates and wish them my best wishes for a bright future ahead, I would advise all those who could not succeed to continue to work hard and come back again. I am sure they will eventually succeed in their efforts.

Technology, a mandatory know-how of our times, makes us all-time approachable and responsive. Here I have a suggestion for my professional colleagues that though use of technology is inevitable, due care must be taken while making use of it. With the growing use of technology in all spheres of life, experts warn us that we are battling an attention economy, where companies are successfully racing to grab the consumers' attention. So, the result is: more than one fourth of smartphone users are always online, without even receiving any alerts. With this, we are losing out on the most valuable asset of our life, and that is time. This is just an example. Let us get on to the right perspective of our life. We just require time to introspect and analyse our experiences and then integrate the learning outcome with our vision for success in life.

I would like to quote the ICAI past President CA. Rameshwar Thakur: *Honesty and integrity should be your watchwords. You should bear yourselves with self-respect and dignity. The path you have to tread may be very hard and beset with difficulties and temptations but if you closely follow my advice unswervingly, I have no doubt that you would emerge successful.* By mere joining the CA profession, we have taken a step forward in the direction of conscientiousness and benevolence and a satisfying professional life. Our noble CA profession has always been a congregation of partners-in-nation-building. Let us understand our responsibility and contribute to the economic health of our nation for which the CA profession stands and exists.

Before I conclude, I would like to extend my best wishes to all on Vinayak or Ganesh Chaturthi, Onam, and Paryushan Parv. Let us celebrate our festivals together with joy.

Best wishes,


CA. Prafulla P. Chhajed
President, ICAI
26th August 2019