

CONNECT

ASA
Going The Extra Mile

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NETWORK MEMBER

Lights, Camera, Connect

Quarterly Newsletter of ASA

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Blockbusters. Bloopers. Behind the scenes. This quarter, it's all about you.



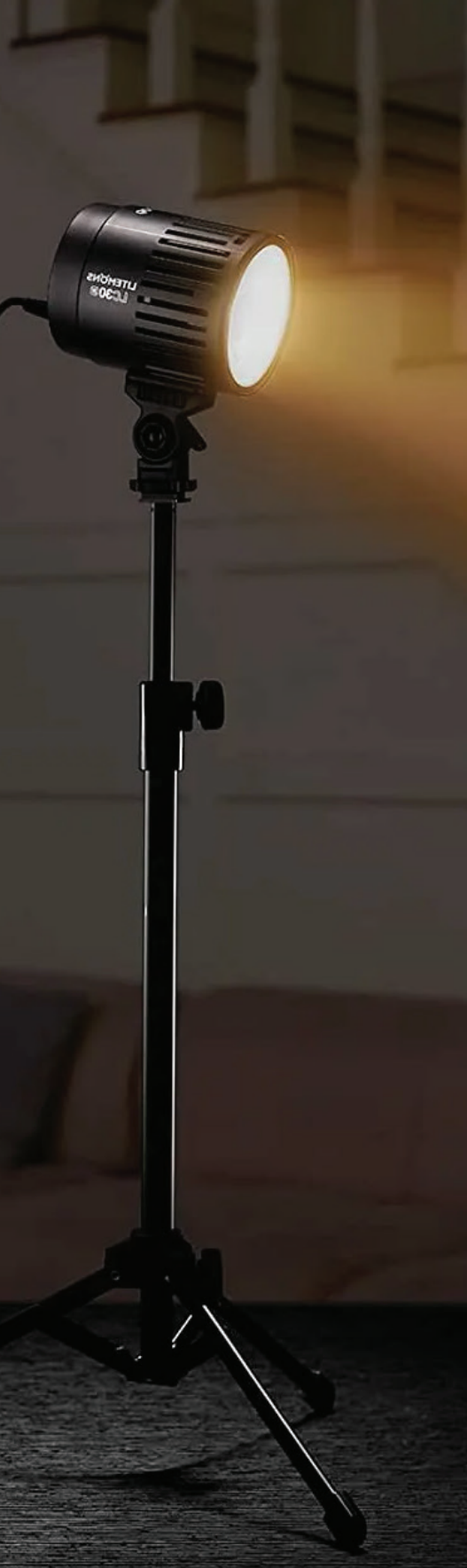
Welcome to the latest edition of **Connect Magazine**, where we're turning the everyday into the extraordinary - and the ordinary workday into a scene straight out of a movie. This time, the spotlight is on you - your hustle, your humour, and your highlights. With the theme "**Lights, Camera, Connect!**", we're capturing the drama, energy, and brilliance that unfolded across ASA from July to September.

Inside these pages, you'll find **blockbusters in the making** - client wins, stellar project deliveries, and unforgettable audit adventures. You'll meet the cast of **Mic Drop performers**, whose ideas and actions made a real impact, and take a peek **behind the scenes** at the tireless effort, teamwork, and yes, even a few bloopers, that brought it all together.

Of course, no ASA story is complete without some **Fun 'n' Frolic** - this quarter brought dance floors alive, filled screens with memes, and turned monsoon blues into moments of joy. From movie nights to regional celebrations, each branch added its own twist to the script - and we've captured it all in high definition.

Whether you're flipping through to relive your team's highlight reel, discover stories from other offices, or just looking for some inspiration and a few laughs, this edition promises something for everyone. We've even thrown in quizzes, photo contests, and interactive polls to make sure you don't just read - you join the cast.

So sit back, grab your favourite drink, and let the pages roll. Because the lights are on, the cameras are rolling, and the ASA story - this quarter - is nothing short of a blockbuster.





A WORD FROM OUR MANAGING PARTNER

"Lights, Camera, Connect" has added a youthful pulse to our connect - and, I must say, the change feels refreshing!

Our office visits would be incomplete without the warm greetings and radiant smiles of our front desk heroes. It's heartwarming to read their stories, and of so many others - from the debut diaries of day one, to the leadership takeaways from the Director's cut, or Vidya's own script. An insight into all that went into creating the ASA blockbuster.

Kudos to Shrikrishna, Rachit, Pankaj, and Gaurav! It's encouraging to see ASA being represented across diverse platforms. A warm welcome to our new partners in Pune - we eagerly await to hear your stories.

As I watch our young travellers explore mountains and seas alike, it's delightful to see how each journey adds a new dimension to their personal growth story. Life is ever throwing up lessons and I am glad that ASAians are alive to constant learnings. On a lighter note, these musings cause my own travel bucket list to bulge - must start dodging some work travel 😊

Whether it's festivals or games, these moments bring us closer together. Let the celebrations continue. And even as we enjoy these moments, let's not lose sight of our goal ie to keep moving forward, pushing boundaries, and recharging our extraordinary story.

The show must go on. Let the cameras roll. More blockbusters coming through....

Best regards

Ajay Sethi

EVENTS AND WEBINARS

ASA at ISACA Hyderabad 25th Anniversary Conference

ASA partnered with the ISACA Hyderabad Chapter in celebrating its 25th Anniversary Conference, centered on AI, Cybersecurity, and Privacy. Representing ASA India, **Shrikrishna Dikshit** with **Rachit Shukla** participated in the CISO Roundtable, offering insights on governance, resilience, and the evolving challenges of today's digital ecosystem.



ASA on NDTV Panel

Ajay Sethi featured live on NDTV's special program "The Great India-China Reset: US Tariffs Bring India & China Closer." He shared his perspective on how evolving US trade policies are reshaping global alliances and the potential impact of a closer India-China dynamic on the world economy.



TECHNICAL EVENTS

Closing Insights at the IIA India Delhi Session

Gaurav Bhatia concluded the IIA India Delhi Branch session on “Navigating the New Normal: A CAE–CRO Leadership Dialogue” with forward-looking perspectives on the evolving role of internal audit in today’s dynamic risk landscape.



MCA tightens supplier finance disclosures from FY 26; CFO to face higher investor scrutiny.

Insights on MCA’s New Supplier Financing Rules

Parveen Kumar authored an article in ETCFO on the MCA’s upcoming supplier financing regulations. He highlighted how the stricter disclosure norms effective from FY26 will reshape CFO priorities, fostering greater transparency, accountability, and compliance across corporate supply chains.

Guest of Honor at The Biome by Renous

Ajay Sethi was invited as Guest of Honor at The Biome by Renous event. He shared his journey of taking an Indian firm to the global stage, emphasizing the role of scale, trust, and meaningful partnerships in building lasting success.



Online Gaming Bill clears Rajya Sabha: RMG entities brace for legal battles, pivots exits

Perspective on the Online Gaming Bill

Sundeep Gupta shared his views in Fortune India, noting that the Online Gaming Bill is a significant milestone for the industry. He emphasized the need for greater clarity around skill-based platforms and the importance of a balanced framework that addresses the interests of all stakeholders

“Independence may have been under some pressure during the pre-liberalisation period. As MNCs moved in, they brought with them best practices of business and finance management. The accounting practices which came along as networks trained local teams in the global outlook towards independence. They added another layer of quality check

Ajay Sethi, Managing partner at Baker Tilly ASA India LLP

Shaping Audit Independence in India

Ajay Sethi, in ETCFO, highlighted how India’s audit independence has matured - driven by global best practices, stronger regulation, and a culture of integrity. He noted that these factors collectively enhance both scrutiny and credibility in today’s financial reporting landscape.

Guiding UK Businesses on India Market Entry

Shyam Ramakrishnan and **Kim Collaco** joined UK Export’s “Bridge to India: Market Entry Strategies” webinar. They guided UK businesses on approaching the Indian market with greater clarity, confidence, and practical insights for successful entry and expansion.

TECHNICAL EVENTS



Panel on Risk Mitigation in Digital Transformation

Gaurav Bhatia joined the panel on Risk Mitigation in the Era of Digital Transformation at the *Financial Fraud & Forensic Audit Conference 2025* hosted by Achromatic Point. He shared insights on aligning audit and anti-fraud strategies to strengthen organizational resilience.



Ajay Sethi attended the Baker Tilly APAC Conference held in Hong Kong. The event celebrated the spirit of collaboration, open dialogue, and shared growth, with the warm hospitality making it a truly memorable experience for all participants.



Pankaj Aneja featured live on DD News, where he explained the correct process for filing Income Tax Returns and highlighted how accurate filing can help taxpayers avoid errors and maximize benefits.

Thought Leadership on UPI Security

Rachit Shukla authored an article on the UPI Information Security & Compliance Framework 2025, highlighting how annual audits, advanced threat detection, and alignment with global compliance standards are set to strengthen security and trust in digital payments.



Brett Johnstone, CIO of Pitcher Partners spoke on "AI as a Game Changer: Transforming Value Creation" for Baker Tilly Leadership Series, Session 2. He shared insights on how AI can enable smarter decision-making, enhance client service, and inspire new ways of driving value in a rapidly evolving business landscape.



Gaurav Bhatia concluded the IIA India Delhi Branch session with compelling insights on the evolving role of internal audit and its growing alignment with emerging risk priorities in today's dynamic business environment.

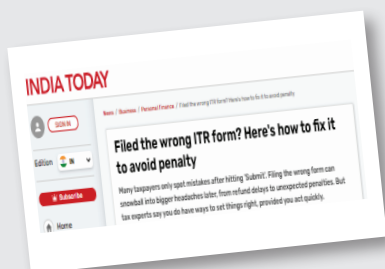
TECHNICAL EVENTS



Ajay Sethi joined a panel on “Strategic Collaboration in the Indo–Australian Trade Potential” at the Indo–Australia Trade Facilitation Roadshow in New Delhi. He shared insights on Doing Business in India and how the ECTA is fostering new avenues for cross-border trade and collaboration.



Sundeep Gupta shared his views in ETCFO on the proposed platform for collaboration among CA firms, noting that it “could be a game-changer, especially for firms in Tier-II and Tier-III cities.” He also emphasized that cultural differences, trust gaps, and autonomy concerns could pose challenges to large-scale consolidation.



Pankaj Aneja in India Today, explained the steps taxpayers should take if they've filed an incorrect ITR form. He noted that while a revised return can be filed multiple times if the original was submitted on time, using the wrong form may result in defective returns, penalties, delayed refunds, and increased scrutiny.



Ramaswami G.N. served as a resource person in a technical session on CARO 2020 organized by the Vizag Branch of SIRC of ICAI. The session was highly interactive, with participants engaging in discussions on key audit provisions, reporting requirements, and practical implementation insights.



Shrikrishna Dikshit shared a thoughtful reminder on valuing effort over outcome — a message that resonates deeply this AI Appreciation Day, as the world embraces automation with a spirit of continuous learning and adaptability.

Medhanshu Mishra, Shrikrishna Dikshit, and **Rachit Shukla** led an insightful webinar on DPDP Act readiness, exploring the evolving data protection landscape for enterprises. The session covered compliance priorities, roles of Data Fiduciaries, third-party risk management, and actionable frameworks to help businesses stay ahead of regulatory expectations.

From Empty Desks to New Horizons



In Chinese, the word 'crisis' is composed of 2 characters: one means danger, and the second means crucial turning point. One represents danger, and the other represents opportunity.

The day I joined the firm, just before my arrival, the director who led the practice with dedication chose to pursue an exciting new opportunity elsewhere, and so did all except one team member. Their departure left a gap that was deeply felt, abandoned desks, and a quiet that spoke volumes. My first day of onboarding was my first day of firefighting, and what was meant to be my first day of settling in became my first day of stepping up.

Tough Decision That Turned the Tide

In that moment, I faced a choice - wait for stability to return or step forward and take charge of every client matter, every deadline, and every open thread of communication. I chose the harder road: to take full ownership from day one. I wasn't alone though; I walked in the shadow of a leader, whose fearless legacy and inspiring journey lit the path ahead.

Moment of Exceptional Teamwork

Ajay and Rajiv stood behind me with unwavering support. They not only provided guidance but also actively engaged - rolling up their sleeves and stepping in with stakeholders whenever the situation required. Alongside them and the team, we built bridges rather than walls. Healthy debates and disagreements were part of the process, but we always aligned on the same side, united in our commitment to be the best practice around. True teamwork is the cornerstone of lasting success.

Innovative Approach That Made the Difference

We sprinted towards a bigger vision, stronger advisory, and a dedicated Japan practice. We emerged as pioneers; a professional services firm on India-Japan business. It was a deeper commitment, led by relentless relationship-building and the courage to learn on the go. By leveraging our strengths and learnings, we crafted a niche that truly set us apart. As the saying goes: The only way to discover the limits of the possible is to venture beyond them into the impossible.

Leadership Lesson Worth Passing On

Resilience is built one decision at a time, teamwork thrives on trust even in disagreement, and innovation often comes after the dust settles. The key is persistence to keep moving; it does not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop!

For anyone new to the firm, know this: challenges will come when you least expect them. But with the right support, a solid team with an open mind, and a willingness to adapt, those same challenges can become the foundation of your proudest achievements. Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success!



Himanshu Srivastava, BAS [GGN]

Beyond the comfort zone

When I first joined ASA, my role was focused on the Indian market. But very soon, I was entrusted with a responsibility I had never imagined—starting off and handling the Global Audit Offshoring vertical. What began with just four staff and one core PCAOB client felt like stepping into completely uncharted territory.

The challenges were immediate and steep: navigating SEC regulations, mastering US GAAP, adapting to unfamiliar audit software, managing multi-accent client communications across time zones, and leading a team equally new to global audits. Each day demanded that I learn, adapt, and deliver at a pace faster than I thought possible. There were moments of uncertainty, but I leaned on the confidence built from managing Indian clients and used it as my anchor in this new global arena.

A year into the journey, things began to shift. The same client who once tested our resilience began entrusting us with more work—and importantly, acknowledged their satisfaction with our output. That validation wasn't just a professional win—it was the turning point. We weren't just surviving; we were building something sustainable and impactful.

More recently, we were handed a large, complex assignment from another client that tested our capacity in every possible way. It challenged us with scale, coordination, and technical depth—but we completed it successfully. That project cemented the fact that we could handle high-stakes, high-pressure global work with quality and precision.

Today, when I look back, the transformation is clear. From a team of 4 to nearly 40, we've grown in size, capability, and reputation. Personally, I've grown in confidence—from Manager to Associate Director, shifting from Indian clients to global ones, mastering cross-cultural communication, and delivering quality at scale. The support of my mentors has been invaluable.

What began as a role I never expected has become a journey I'm deeply grateful for. The challenges I once faced with hesitation are now the very experiences shaping my confidence to take on even more. From building trust with clients to nurturing a growing team, this journey has redefined not just my career but also my belief in what I can achieve—especially when pushed beyond my comfort zone.

Vidya Sreedhar, Global Offshoring Services



Turning Chaos into Compliance

We were hired by a large multinational company having a significant presence in the consumer white goods space. The local joint venture partners were not cooperating with the foreign partner in terms of reporting requirements and cash flow management. The company's books hadn't been updated for over a year, GST filings were delayed, TDS returns were inconsistent, and statutory audits were pending. Notices from the Income Tax Department and MCA were piling up, threatening penalties and reputational damage.

Herculean task, requiring a structured, team-driven approach. We began with conducting a compliance audit to map out all overdue filings and accounting gaps. Then, a dedicated task force comprising bookkeepers, indirect tax experts, and company law professionals was formed from within the ABS teams to tackle the backlog.

The team worked in phases: first updating core ledgers, then reconciling bank statements, followed by filing past GST and TDS returns and secretarial filings. Within ten weeks, the company's books were current, and all statutory filings were submitted. Cash flow plans were prepared on a rolling quarter basis for the next 12 months. MIS reports were redesigned to include key metrics required by the foreign partner. A monthly compliance calendar was introduced with responsibility allocation, and the internal finance team was trained to maintain discipline going forward.

The transformation was not just operational; it was cultural. The entire project required clarity of thought, assessing the pitfalls of various courses of action, building a structured approach with defined timelines and responsibilities, and monitoring the deliverables closely on a daily basis. This also provided for course correction as needed.

Sundeep Gupta, ABS [GGN]

Atlas Shrugged by Ayn Rand

Who is John Galt ?

In Greek mythology, Atlas is condemned to hold the heavens on his shoulders—a symbol of endurance, strength, and burden. But what if Atlas shrugged? What if the one holding up the world simply... let go? That's the explosive premise of Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged*, a novel that masquerades as a dystopian thriller but is, at its core, a philosophical rebellion. Published in 1957, it's Rand's magnum opus, a sweeping tale of collapse, resistance, and rebirth, driven by her radical philosophy of **Objectivism**.

The story unfolds in a world where the doers, that is, the inventors, entrepreneurs, and thinkers, are shackled by ever-growing regulations. Success is punished, mediocrity rewarded. Dagny Taggart, a brilliant railroad executive, and Hank Rearden, a steel magnate, fight to keep their industries alive as the system around them rots. Trains stop. Factories close. The brightest minds begin to vanish.

And through it all echoes a haunting question: **"Who is John Galt?"**

At first, it's a throwaway line, used to express helplessness, confusion, and resignation. But as the mystery deepens, we learn that John Galt is real. He's the architect of a silent revolution, leading the world's creators in a strike, not of labor, but of intellect. Galt believes that the mind is the engine of civilization, and when the minds go on strike, the world stops.

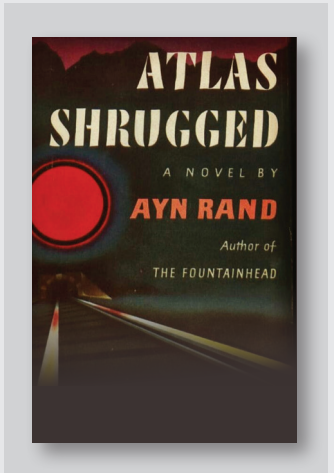
Rand's heroes are unapologetically rational, fiercely independent, and morally committed to their own happiness. Her villains are bureaucrats, collectivists, and emotional manipulators—leeches who survive by draining the energy of the productive. The message is clear: **a free society must honor its creators, not crucify them.**

It's a bold, provocative idea. And disturbingly familiar.

But Rand's world is starkly black and white. Her protagonists are near-perfect. Logical, driven, emotionally bulletproof. Her antagonists are cartoonishly corrupt or pathetically weak. In the real world, people are messy, conflicted, and layered. Rand's characters often feel like philosophical archetypes rather than living, breathing humans.

Still, *Atlas Shrugged* is undeniably powerful. It forces you to ask uncomfortable questions. What happens when the people who carry the world decide to drop it? What if the system you trust is built to punish excellence? What if the collapse isn't accidental but engineered by those who refuse to be exploited? Whether you agree with Rand or not, the book will challenge you. It will make you look at the world around you - governments, institutions, and people - and think: **Is the system rewarding the right people? Or is it punishing and driving them away?**

And I must confess, when I first read it, and I have read it many times, the question that pops up every time is - **Will Atlas ever shrug?**



Sundeep Gupta, ABS GGN





From First Impressions to Lasting Impact: Joining the ASA Family

The moment I entered, Rajesh Krishnamoorthy Sir gave me a clear overview of the firm's policies and procedures. He explained everything in such an excellent and easy-to-understand manner that I felt comfortable and confident from the very beginning. It was also a pleasure meeting him personally at the office for the first time.

What made the day even more special was being introduced to other key members—including direct introductions to Vinay Sir and Ram Prasad Sir, as well as the Admin and Payroll teams. The onboarding process began right away, reflecting the structure and culture of ASA.

One of the happiest moments was my conversation with Ram Prasad Sir about Odisha and its culture. Hearing him speak about my home state filled me with pride and joy. Our interaction became even more memorable when he curiously asked me the meaning of my name, "Selvi", and encouraged me to ask my parents about it—adding a friendly and humorous touch to our exchange.

A highlight of the day was when Ram Prasad Sir shared meaningful insights on maintaining integrity and valuing the organisation's culture. His words left a lasting impression on me.

I'm especially thankful to Mr. Vinod for gifting me a coffee mug—a simple gesture, yet one that made me feel truly welcomed.

Lastly, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Rajesh Sir for making the hiring process so smooth and comfortable. The support from seniors, managers like Mohit Sir, and even newly qualified CAs was truly encouraging.

Overall, I feel incredibly grateful to be a part of such an esteemed organisation like ASA & Associates LLP. Looking forward to the journey ahead with enthusiasm and pride.

Selvi Sahoo, ASR [BLR]

From Wrong Workstation to Right Place: A First-Day Story

My first day at ASA & LLP was a mix of excitement, nervous energy, and a lot of curiosity to learn. Of course, I added a little comedy to the day - I confidently sat at someone else's workstation and even wrestled with a glass door that simply wouldn't open. Luckily, those oops moments broke the ice and made everyone laugh. What really surprised me was the culture: I expected a very formal setup but found a collaborative and supportive team instead. By the end of the day, the nerves had disappeared, and it already felt like I belonged here. The warm welcome from colleagues turned my mistakes into funny memories rather than embarrassing ones. It showed me that this is a place where even small blunders can turn into bonding moments. And honestly, that made me look forward to Day 2 even more.

Surendra Babu, ASR [HYD]





The Power of Asking Questions: My ASA Story

August 22, 2024, is a date etched in my memory. It was the day I officially entered the corporate world, filled with curiosity, excitement, and countless questions.

I arrived at the office right at 9:30 AM, eager to start. As no one from my team was around yet, I spent my first 30 minutes seated in the ABS department "also made some friends there". I quietly observed my surroundings while preparing for what lay ahead.

Soon, I met a senior from my department. Without missing a beat, I asked my first question: "Are you also an article?"-he answered with smile "No ", That simple question sparked a conversation that made me feel instantly connected.

As more colleagues arrived, my curiosity only grew. I asked one of the most pressing questions on my mind: "Is the work culture in ASA good?" From there, the day continued with more questions, more answers, and a growing sense of belonging.

That first day was filled with:

- My first login
- My first team interaction
- My first glimpse into ASA's culture
- And most importantly, my first step into a journey of growth

Now, as I write this, I've officially completed one full year since that debut. I have evolved from a curious newcomer into a contributor. The questions haven't stopped—but now, I also have a few answers of my own to share.

Here's to the journey so far and to everything that lies ahead.

Akshat Mittal, RAS, [GGN]

Earning Your Place, Every Day: The ASA Way

When I joined ASA, I knew it wouldn't be a walk in the park but I didn't quite expect the reality. I thought it would be like any other first day: a mix of nerves, excitement, and a bit of uncertainty. Instead, I was met with an intensity that was both inspiring and intimidating.

The office felt warm, people were welcoming but this wasn't a place where encouragement replaced accountability. At ASA, you had to earn your place every single day.

One moment hit me hard. It was Mr. Ajay Sethi's wedding anniversary, yet there he was in the office, driving the team, setting high standards, and refusing to treat it as anything less than a regular workday. That was my wake-up call. There was no room here for "taking it easy" or finding excuses. If you wanted to belong, you had to show up, give your best, and keep proving yourself.

The beginning was tough. The bar wasn't just high, it felt unreachable. But I soon realized this was the true meaning of growth: being challenged relentlessly, pushed beyond your comfort zone, and delivering no matter what.

Since 2008, I've experienced both highs and lows, but the values I learned here - hard work, discipline, and unwavering commitment have never left me. ASA isn't for those seeking shortcuts. But if you're willing to put in the effort, it will shape you into someone stronger, more resilient, and ready for anything.

Preeti Sama, Administration [DEL]



The Mysterious Man on My First Day

They say first days are always memorable - sometimes because of the excitement, sometimes because of the blunders, and sometimes because of the mysterious characters you meet. Mine was a mix of all three.



Two years ago, I got a sudden call: "You have an interview today." Fast forward, I landed my first day at ASA. Like most people stepping into the corporate world, I had imagined walking into the office, meeting the team, and being introduced to my manager. What I didn't know was that in Risk Advisory, the team usually operates from the client's location.

So, on Day One, I confidently reported to the Gurgaon office, only to be told - "Your reporting manager is Sandeep." Naturally, I asked, "Where is he?" The reply: "At the client's place."

After collecting my laptop (which I received only around 4 PM) and a quick brief about the client, I was told, "Tomorrow, head straight to the client's location."

Cut to the next day.

I reached the client site, faced the standard set of questions: "What do you know about the client?" and tried to manage my nerves while absorbing everything around me. Suddenly, the atmosphere shifted. People straightened up. The chatter died. Someone had arrived.

The man looked important—clearly a higher authority. He began speaking, casually asking, "Who took your interview?" I replied confidently, "Someone named Sandeep."

The room went quiet. I noticed blank stares, as if I had said something terribly wrong. My heart sank. "Did I mix up the name? Was it not Sandeep?"



He continued with a few more onboarding questions and then moved on. But the silence, the awkward glances, and my own spiralling thoughts stayed with me. Had I committed a faux pas on my very first day?

A little later, my colleagues asked, "Have you seen Sandeep?"

Trying to save face, I replied, "Yes, I checked his LinkedIn—he wears glasses and has a beard." And just like that, the entire team burst out laughing. I sat there, baffled, until the truth revealed itself.

That mysterious man who had walked in, the one who had questioned me, the one I had confidently spoken about—was none other than Sandeep sir himself.

To my defence, he had recently shaved, completely changing his look from the LinkedIn profile I had seen. But on Day One, all I could think was, "Could someone please let me in on the joke too?"

And that's how my first memorable encounter with Sandeep sir unfolded—filled with suspense, mistaken identity, and a healthy dose of humour. Looking back, it was the perfect icebreaker to kickstart my journey at ASA.

Riding through paradise - A Sri Lankan adventure

As a true Frenchwoman, a proper summer break is non-negotiable. And after years of dismissing Sri Lanka—thinking it couldn't match India's exotic vibe—I finally gave in. Spoiler: I was so wrong.



Landing in Colombo, I rented a bike and set off on an 11-day adventure across this lush island. First stop: Kandy—a calm city wrapped around a scenic lake. The drive was chaotic (but hey, I've seen Delhi!), and the sunset made it all worth it. I ended the day at the Temple of the Tooth, said to house a relic of Buddha. The botanical gardens there were a dream—orchids, palms, and peace.

Next came a deep dive into Sri Lanka's ancient soul: the Cave Temples of Dambulla, the towering Sigiriya Rock Fortress, and the sacred ruins of Polonnaruwa and Anuradhapura—each site echoing tales of kings and monks.



In between, I swapped temples for tusks with a bumpy but magical safari in Kaudulla, watching herds of elephants roam free—playful calves and proud matriarchs alike.

Then eastward to Trincomalee and Nilaveli, where beaches dazzled and dolphins danced beside our boat at sunrise—it honestly felt like a live nature documentary.

After a breezy pause in Arugam Bay, I rode into the misty hills of Ella—perfect for hikes, sweeping views, and sore legs. I ended the trip with one last elephant encounter in Udawalawe National Park, where a majestic tusker passed within arm's reach, followed by the happiest baby elephant I've ever seen.

After 1,400 km on my trusty red TVS, it was time to say goodbye. With its rich history, wild nature, soul-soothing calm, and smiling locals, Sri Lanka was everything I didn't expect—and everything I needed.

Just a short flight away, yet truly a world apart.



Léa Parmentier - ES [DEL]

Epic Bike Ride to Dharchula

By a Rider Who Reached Office Just in Time

This Good Friday weekend turned into one of the most memorable rides of my life—a 2,000 km journey with friends from Gurugram to Dehradun, Mussoorie, Dharchula, and back. We'd been planning this since our last Rishikesh trip, and finally, the dates aligned.

We started late Thursday night, around 10 PM, right after work. A few hours in, hunger struck, and we stopped at a roadside dhaba for chai and parathas—the classic biker fuel. The simple meal recharged us for the night ahead.

Our first stop was Dehradun, and then a ride up to Mussoorie. After 13 hours on the road, we checked into a hotel. A few excited first-timers decided to explore Mall Road, while I, the seasoned rider, tried (unsuccessfully) to convince them to rest. This caught up with us later, as fatigue set in and we had to halt more often than planned. But that's part of the fun when riding with a mixed group.

After just 4–5 hours of sleep, we set off for Dharchula, nearly 470 km away. The route offered stunning views, winding roads, and frequent halts to soak it all in. After three major breaks, we reached around 2 AM. The local police stopped us, checked our documents, and warned us about wildlife during night rides.

We checked in and devoured our dinner—probably the best meal ever (thanks to sheer exhaustion!). The next morning, we visited the Dharchula temple, a peaceful and memorable experience. We also tasted local treats like Rabri and Gouhat, which added a delicious cultural touch.

The return journey—700+ km—was tougher, with office looming. After riding nearly 14 hours straight and just two breaks, I reached home at 6:30 AM on Monday, just in time to get ready for work.

Exhausting? Definitely.

Worth it? A thousand times yes.

It wasn't just about the kilometers—but the memories, stories, and friendships that made it epic.

Lokesh Kumar, ASR [DEL]



Ajanta & Ellora Caves

A Timeless Journey into Stone

Ever since I first read about them in my school textbooks, I knew I'd visit the Ajanta and Ellora Caves someday. That dream finally came true this June.

We began with Ajanta Caves, located about 12 km from Aurangabad. After reaching the base, a special tourist bus took us deep between the mountains - here time seemed to stand still. The path ahead felt untouched, as if no one lived nearby. But hidden beyond those barren hills stood about 30 ancient caves, adorned with intricate paintings and sculptures. It didn't feel like a group of caves - it felt like a forgotten civilization once thrived there. The sheer thought of people building such grandeur in such isolation was awe-inspiring. I couldn't help but wonder what the first person who discovered them must have felt. Yes, it involved a lot of walking - but every step was worth it.

The first view of Ellora Caves was nothing short of breathtaking. I entered through Cave 2 - and it wasn't just a cave. It was a giant temple carved into a mountain. The aura of the place was magnetic. Some caves even had multiple floors, entirely sculpted from stone between the 5th and 10th centuries.

These weren't just artworks; they were architectural marvels. One cave looked like a king's palace, interconnected with others. I walked in one way, wandered through for 15 minutes, and exited barely 20 feet from where I began. The layout blew my mind.

And there's so much more - history, art, and adventure, all wrapped into one. Imagine trekking through ancient monuments, climbing staircases over a thousand years old - still strong and standing.

Before heading back, we also visited the Mini Taj Mahal in Aurangabad, built by Aurangzeb for his mother. It looked like a smaller, peaceful version of the real Taj - no crowds, just quiet beauty.

Whatever I read or imagined - the real experience was ten times greater.

Akash K, ASR [CHN]





When Paradise Touched My Heart: A Journey Through Kashmir

Just a week before the tragic incident at Pahalgam, I had the privilege of visiting Kashmir with my family - a journey that will forever remain close to my heart.

Our trip began in Pahalgam, where we spent a night amidst pine forests, river valleys, and serene landscapes. One of the most adventurous experiences was the pony ride to Baisaran Valley, popularly known as Mini Switzerland. The ride itself was thrilling - taking us along winding trails through thick woods and rolling meadows. On reaching the valley, we were greeted by a vast green expanse, encircled by snow-clad peaks. It felt like stepping into a painting. The untouched beauty of Baisaran truly lived up to its name, leaving us spellbound.

Next, we journeyed to Sonamarg, the Meadow of Gold, where golden-hued pastures and sparkling streams created picture-perfect scenes at every turn.

Our final stop was Gulmarg, a paradise for nature lovers and adventure seekers alike. The highlight was the famous Gondola cable car ride, which carried us high above the valleys, revealing breathtaking views of the Himalayas. Floating over snowy slopes and alpine forests felt like being in another world.

We returned home with hearts full of joy and magical memories. But just days later, news of the attack at Pahalgam reached us. Having recently walked those same peaceful paths, it was heartbreaking to imagine such violence in a place that radiates so much beauty.

Kashmir is rightly called Paradise on Earth. My journey was not just about scenic wonders - it was about adventure, peace, and precious moments with family. Those memories are now etched in my heart, made even more meaningful by the reminder of how fragile peace can be.

Shanjumol P K, ASR [KCH]



Shillong & Cherrapunji Monsoon Magic

My journey to Shillong and Cherrapunji felt like stepping into nature's most enchanting canvas. The winding roads leading up to the Scotland of the East were lined with pine trees, rolling hills, and clouds drifting lazily through the valleys. Shillong, with its colonial charm, buzzing markets, and musical heartbeat, felt both alive and serene at once.

From Shillong, I headed to Cherrapunji - renowned for its record-breaking rainfall and breathtaking landscapes. The drive itself was a visual treat, with misty cliffs, cascading waterfalls, and lush greenery at every turn.

A visit to Nohkalikai Falls, plunging dramatically into a turquoise pool, was one of the highlights of the trip. Standing before its sheer drop was a humbling and magical experience. Another marvel was the living root bridges of Nongriat - a true testament to the Khasi people's ingenuity and harmony with nature. Walking on these centuries-old bridges felt like stepping into a fairytale forest.

The rains here don't dampen the spirit - they create magic. Clouds descend gently over the hills, waterfalls grow louder and more powerful, and every leaf shines with freshness. Sitting with a hot cup of tea, watching the rain sweep across the emerald hills, I truly understood why Cherrapunji remains one of the most extraordinary places on Earth.

This trip wasn't just about checking places off a list - it was about feeling nature in its purest form: raw, untamed, and overwhelmingly beautiful. Shillong and Cherrapunji reminded me that sometimes, the rain isn't something to escape... it's something to embrace.

Manya Khandelwal, RAS [GGN]

Leh-Ladakh: A Journey Through Altitude, History, and Adventure

Sometimes the mountains remind you who's in charge. On my first day in Leh, I ignored acclimatization for meetings - my oxygen dropped to 60. Fear struck, but with rest I recovered, learning quickly that in Ladakh, patience is survival.



At the Hall of Fame Museum, every artifact spoke of sacrifice. A bomb from the Kargil War inscribed "From Raveena Tandon to Nawaz Sharif" showed the wit and defiance of our soldiers.

Faith felt stronger than altitude at Gurudwara Pathar Sahib, where a sacred rock still bears Guru Nanak Dev Ji's imprint. Then came Magnetic Hill, where vehicles seem to roll uphill - a prank by the Himalayas themselves.



The ruins of Leh Palace whispered royal sagas, while rafting down the Zaskar River roared with adrenaline and laughter. At Khardung La (17,982 ft), prayer flags fluttered like whispers of courage, and in Nubra Valley, riding double-humped camels on sand dunes at 10,000 ft felt like reliving the Silk Route.

Pangong Tso dazzled with fifty shades of blue, while Umling La (19,024 ft), the world's highest motorable pass, proved altitude is also attitude.



At Hanle, the Milky Way became my night lamp - an endless galaxy with zero distractions. From reel to real, Rancho's School of 3 Idiots fame blended nostalgia with eco-friendly design. The golden sunset at Shanti Stupa spoke through silence, and barefoot walks in Hanle's marshlands felt like touching the pulse of the Himalayas. Evenings at Lala's Café added stories, art, and warmth to the journey.



Ladakh is not just a place - it's an emotion carved in altitude. Where faith meets science, deserts meet lakes, and valour meets serenity. I came here chasing adventure, but I left carrying lessons: respect the mountains, embrace the silence, and never forget to look up at the stars.



Sandeep Kumar, RAS [GGN]

My Journey with ASA & Associates LLP

I began my journey with ASA & Associates LLP on March 1, 2012, when I joined as an office boy. At that time, my role was very simple and humble. Over the years, with guidance, encouragement, and continuous learning, I have grown along with the organization. Today, I am proud to serve as Assistant Manager – Admin, with responsibilities in Administration, HR, and extending support to Accounts and IT functions.

Looking back, the journey has been both challenging and rewarding. Moving from managing day-to-day errands to now handling core administrative and HR responsibilities has been a true transformation. Every challenge taught me something new, and every opportunity strengthened my confidence and skills.

A milestone close to my heart is being the first employee of our office. From those early days to now being part of a team of more than 120 colleagues, I feel a strong sense of belonging and responsibility toward ASA.

This growth would not have been possible without the support of many. I am deeply grateful to all the Partners – past and present – for placing their trust in me, and for their constant guidance, and to all my colleagues across branches who have contributed to my journey.

As I look ahead, I remain committed to giving my best, upgrading my knowledge, and continuing to grow with ASA. I hope my story can serve as a small reminder that with dedication, consistency, and the right support, growth is always possible – no matter where you start.



A Creative Soul with a Passion for Art, Dance, and Discovery

Keerthana is a vibrant and artistic individual whose life is filled with colour, rhythm, and curiosity. Dance is one of her greatest passions - a form of expression that allows her to connect deeply with emotion and culture. Whether performing or simply dancing for joy, she brings energy and grace to every movement. She has been with ASA for more than 5 years.

Her creativity shines through in her love for bottle art, where she transforms ordinary glass bottles into eye-catching decor, and in earring making, where each handmade piece reflects her unique style and attention to detail. These hobbies are more than pastimes - they are her way of bringing beauty into the world.

Adding to her artistic flair is her love for travel. Exploring new places fuels her imagination and inspires her creativity. Whether it's discovering local art forms, learning cultural dances, or simply taking in the beauty of new landscapes, traveling enriches her life and broadens her perspective.

For Keerthana, life is a beautiful journey - and she's dancing, creating, and exploring every step of the way.

Keerthana- KCH





My Career Journey with ASA

My journey with ASA began in 2008 when I joined as a Front Office Executive. As a newcomer, I was eager to learn - and ASA offered the perfect environment. From day one, I was surrounded by supportive partners and colleagues who were not only knowledgeable but also warm and approachable. Their encouragement helped me build confidence and grow both professionally and personally.

During my early years, I developed a strong work ethic and absorbed the values that define ASA's culture. I enjoyed my role deeply and felt a strong sense of belonging. However, due to personal commitments, I had to step away in 2014.

In 2017, I was fortunate to rejoin - and it truly felt like coming home. The warmth and acceptance I received reaffirmed the family-like bond I share with the firm. Since then, my journey has been rewarding. I continue to feel valued and supported, and I remain grateful for the trust and opportunities given to me.

ASA is more than a workplace - it's where I've grown, contributed, and built lasting relationships. To all the partners and colleagues who've been part of this journey: thank you for your guidance and friendship. You've made a lasting impact.

I look forward to continuing this journey with the same commitment and gratitude. ASA will always be a special part of my career.

Chitra M - CHN

Reflection of my journey

For over a decade, I have served as the face of the company ensuring every client, visitor, and team member feels welcomed. My consistency in creating a positive and professional atmosphere has contributed significantly to the company's reputation and culture.

It has been a privilege to be a part of ASA CCI journey and to witness its growth firsthand. I am proud of the relationships I have built and the contributions I have made, and I am grateful for the trust provided by the organization.

The relationships I have built are what I will cherish most. I want to thank everyone for their partnership, support, and the memories we've created. My goal has always been to set a positive tone, and everyone's warmth made that an easy task.

My time here has been more than a job; it has been a rewarding journey of learning and contributing to the success of ASA -CCI- India member of BakerTilly International.....

I look forward to watching the company continue to thrive & go that extra mile- always exceed expectations !!

Ganbatte kudasai (good luck)

Anju Bajaj - DEL



Welcoming with Warmth, One Smile at a Time

Working at the front desk isn't just a job - it's a dynamic experience filled with energy, interaction, and meaningful moments. As the first face people see when they walk into the office, I take pride in setting a welcoming tone for the day.

Each morning, I step into my role with enthusiasm and a cheerful attitude, believing that even a simple "hello" can create a lasting impression. From greeting visitors and guiding them, to answering calls and managing appointments, no two days are ever the same - and that's what keeps it exciting!

I enjoy connecting with people, hearing little snippets of their stories, and offering help when needed. Some days are calm, while others come with their share of surprises, but I've learned to navigate it all with a smile. Whether it's assisting a colleague, coordinating schedules, or solving a last-minute issue, I find joy in keeping things running smoothly.

Even during the busiest hours, I make it a point to stay calm and bring lightness to the atmosphere. Sharing a laugh with coworkers, offering a quick word of encouragement, or even enjoying a cup of tea between calls helps me stay refreshed and grounded.

To me, handling reception is more than managing paperwork or answering phones - it's about creating positive interactions, offering help with kindness, and spreading a little joy every day.

At the end of the day, I leave knowing I've made someone's visit a little easier, their experience a little warmer, and the workplace just a bit brighter. And that, for me, is the most fulfilling part of this role.

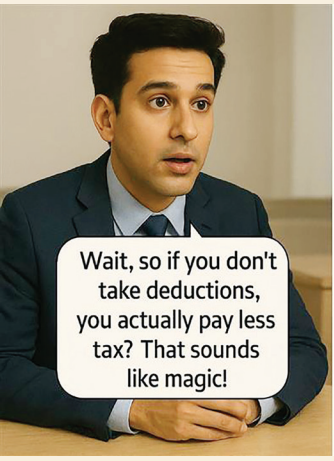
Ruchika Gusain - GGN



So, can I still claim Section 80C deductions under the new regime?



Nope, but the good news is you get lower tax rates instead.



Wait, so if you don't take deductions, you actually pay less tax? That sounds like magic!

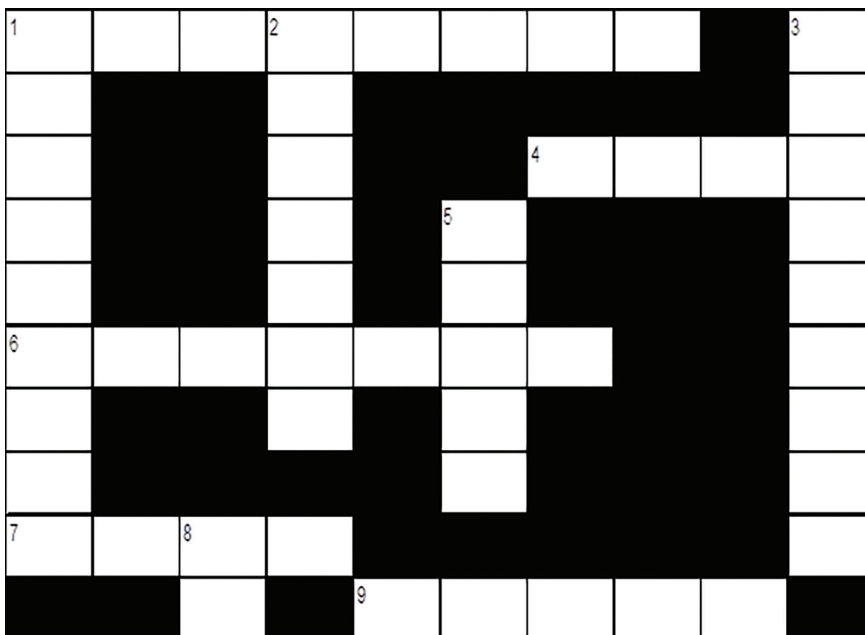


We all burst out laughing, but it took a solid 10 minute to explain how skipping deductions might actually save money.

Magic of New Regime

Meenu Kaushik
TAX [DEL]

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



UP AND DOWN

- 1 ISACA's 25th Anniversary Conference held for _____ Chapter.
- 2 Final stop of the adventure—a snow paradise in the Himalayas—_____.
- 3 Unforgettable long ride spanning 2,000 km for _____.
- 5 Sri Lanka's scenic hill city wrapped around a tranquil lake—_____.
- 8 Pankaj Aneja made a live appearance on _____ News.

LEFT TO RIGHT

- 1 Baker Tilly APAC Conference 2025 took place in _____.
- 4 Evenings at the 307-year-old café in Ladakh—_____s.
- 6 A classic novel recommendation "Atlas Shrugged" authored by _____.
- 7 Webinar on the _____ Act readiness led by Medhanshu, Shrikrishna & Rachit.
- 9 Shortcut key – CTRL+ _____ for Mind Read function as wished by Vidya Sreedhar.

CELEBRATIONS GALORE

Marriage marks the beginning of a shared journey where love, trust, and companionship guide the way. May this union be blessed with harmony, joy, and countless cherished moments as you grow together through life's seasons.



Vishnuraj P R, ABS [KCH]



May your little prince be blessed with good health, endless joy, and a lifetime filled with love and success. May his laughter brighten every corner of your home, and may he grow surrounded by wisdom, kindness, and happiness always

S/o Akhil Mishra, Risk Advisory [DEL]

OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM EXPANDS

Welcome



**ATUL
BHATE**

Partner
Business Advisory Services
Pune



**RAHUL
KHASNIS**

Partner
Assurance
Pune



**AKSHAY
DEODHAR**

Executive Partner
*Accounting and Business Support,
Indirect Tax*
Pune



**KIRAN
BHAGWAT**

Executive Partner
Accounting and Business Support
Pune

Game Night

SC-RC Hyderabad organized an electrifying Laser Shoot Game Night at Laser Legend, turning the usual office buzz into a battlefield of fun and excitement. Colleagues teamed up for thrilling rounds in a dark arena, chasing scores, dodging beams, and sharing endless laughter. The night wrapped up on a sweet note with ice creams, making it a perfect blend of energy, teamwork, and camaraderie. Truly, a night to remember with great games and even greater company!



SC-RC DEL/GGN organized a fun-filled Game Night at the office, bringing together colleagues for an evening of strategy, laughter, and light-hearted competition. From board games to casual play, everyone joined in the excitement. The evening wrapped up with tasty wraps, Coke, and snacks, making it a perfect mix of relaxation and bonding.



ASA Party

SC-RC DEL/GGN organized the much-awaited ASA Party, bringing colleagues together for an evening packed with excitement and celebration. The night was filled with unexpected surprises, delicious food, flowing drinks, and music that kept the vibes alive. With laughter, dancing, and endless fun, the party truly became a highlight of the season!



Ganesh Chaturthi: The Heartbeat of Mumbai

Ganesh Chaturthi is not merely a festival; it is the soul of Mumbai and Maharashtra. Celebrated with unmatched devotion, grandeur, and community spirit, it holds a special place in the hearts of millions. What began as a movement initiated by Lokmanya Tilak to unite people during the freedom struggle has now blossomed into a cultural celebration that transcends boundaries of caste, creed, and class.

During this sacred time, the city echoes with the joyous chant of “गणपती बाप्पा मोरया!”—a call of hope, faith, and unity. The word “Morya” honors Morya Gosavi, a devoted follower of Lord Ganesha, whose name was blessed to be sung alongside the Lord’s for eternity. Mumbai’s celebrations also highlight the spirit of giving and togetherness. Offering Ukadiche Modak, Lord Ganesha’s favorite sweet, symbolizes joy and prosperity. Each bite reflects the bliss He brings into the lives of His devotees.

Among the many idols, Lalbaugcha Raja stands as a beacon of faith and hope. Millions visit this majestic idol each year, waiting for hours with unwavering devotion. For many, Lalbaugcha Raja is not just an idol but a symbol of dreams fulfilled and prayers answered.

In essence, Ganesh Chaturthi is Mumbai’s heartbeat—a festival that unites people, dissolves barriers, and celebrates faith, creativity, and togetherness. It is a living testament to the power of devotion to uplift and inspire.

At ASA, we too celebrated this joyous festival with great enthusiasm and faith.

Sushama Wangane [MUM]



World Environment Day

SC-RC Bangalore organized an engaging online Environmental Awareness Quiz on World Environment Day. Colleagues tested their eco-knowledge, discovered interesting facts about the planet, and competed for exciting eco-friendly prizes.



Movie Night

SC-RC DEL/GGN organized an exciting Office Movie Night for colleagues across locations. After a fun movie poll between Sitaare Zameen Par, Superman, and Jurassic World, with popcorn tubs in hand the team enjoyed Jurassic World’s dinosaur mayhem together.





Pickleball event

SC-RC Mumbai organized an energetic Pickleball event at the Global Sports Pickleball Center, Goregaon (West). The evening kicked off with exciting matches at 6:00 PM, as colleagues showcased their competitive spirit on the court. After the games, everyone gathered over a delightful dinner, sharing laughter, conversations, and camaraderie. It was the perfect mix of sport, fitness, and fun!

Independence Day

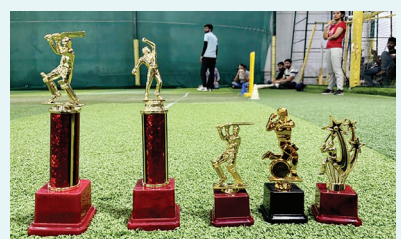
SC-RC organized vibrant Independence Day celebrations across all offices, bringing colleagues together to honour the spirit of freedom and patriotism.

The celebrations didn't end there — fun games and activities filled the offices with laughter, friendly competition, and camaraderie. Across locations, the energy was the same: unity, cultural pride, and joy, making this Independence Day a truly memorable one for all.



Cricket Tournament

SC-RC Delhi organized an exhilarating Cricket Tournament, and the energy was unmatched! With enthusiastic participation and outstanding sportsmanship, the matches kept everyone on edge. The champions, True and Fair XI, lifted the trophy with pride, while the spirited Chill Champ team claimed the runner-up spot. It was a day of teamwork, cheers, and unforgettable memories on and off the field.



If you could switch lives with someone for a day, who would it be?

Honestly, I'm pretty happy with my own script. But if I must, then let me be Agatha Christie for a day—author of *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*.

If you could create a new holiday, what would it be called?

"My Day"—celebrated the morning after filing season ends. It comes with mandatory naps and dessert for breakfast.

If you could instantly teleport anywhere, where would you go first?

Straight to Meghalaya—greenery, waterfalls, clouds that high-five you, and nature playing background music..

What's the most unexpected thing you have learnt this year?

That surviving short-term hellish pressure deserves a certificate, maybe even a vacation.

What's the best professional advice you've ever received—and do you still follow it?

"Whatever challenges come your way, take them head-on."
- by a mentor in past days.

If your career were a movie, what would the title be?

"Everything Happens for a Reason."

If Excel had a "magic" function named after you, what would it do?

The Mind-Read Function - press CTRL + Space. At least it gives us some space.

Which moment in your career made you feel truly proud?

The day I was trusted to lead a big project, and nobody asked, 'Are you sure you can handle it?'—that felt pretty great

What's your favourite productivity hack?

Taking on challenges with a big smile—confuses problems into thinking they've lost already.

What's a misconception people have about you?

That I have everything under control. Truth is, even my to-do list needs a to-do list.

Rapid Fire

- **Favourite type of weather?**
Rainy—nothing beats chai, pakoras, and a dramatic monsoon playlist.
- **If you could thank one person for shaping your life, who would it be?**
GOD—best mentor ever, always available, no consultation fees.
- **Pen & paper or digital notes?**
Pen & paper. (Yes, I even carried one to this rapid-fire!)
- **PowerPoint or Excel?**
Excel—it's the key to "excellence."
- **Best office playlist: silence, Lo-Fi beats, or classic hits?**
Classic hits. Because nothing says "audit mode" like retro tunes.
- **One word your colleagues would use to describe you?**
Always Smiling :)
- **Beach vacation or mountain escape?**
Beach all the way—waves, sunsets, and sand that sneaks into your shoes.
- **Book in hand or movie on screen?**
Book in hand—because flipping pages feels way cooler than pressing play.
- **One app you check first in the morning?**
WhatsApp—because the day doesn't officially start until unread messages flood in.
- **Dinner with any fictional character**
Funsuk Wangroo!

In conversation with
Vidya Sreedhar
Global Offshoring Services

Anand G
Associate Director, ASR [BLR]

Precision his compass, perfection his art,
Audit and insight flow straight from his heart.

Steadfast in standards, sharp in his view,
He chases excellence in all that he'll do.

Rules may evolve, but his focus won't tire,
Fuelled by knowledge and quiet fire.

Off the clock, with action and flair,
His zeal for life is beyond compare



Shrikrishna Dikshit
Partner, RAS [MUM]

He strides in with laughter, light on his feet,
A spark in his gaze, making challenges meet.

He jokes through the chaos, stays calm in the fight,
and turns daring visions to everyday light.

Like a soft breeze at dusk, or a calm Mumbai tide,
He earns trust with ease and holds firm with pride.

So, here's to the captain, both gentle and wise,
with stories that sparkle and a mind that flies



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