

# CONNECT

ASA-CCI



Quarterly Newsletter of ASA & Associates LLP / Corporate Catalyst India

Volume 22 | Issue 1 April-June 2018



- 3 @ Glance
- 4 Technical Sessions
- 7 Fun & Frolic
- 11 Talent Unfold
- 12 Unity in Diversity
- 14 Relive a Moment
- 15 Coffee with Connect
- 16 Travel Diaries
- 18 Our Expatriates Experience
- 20 On a Lighter Note

## MANAGEMENT FUNDA

A frog asked two geese to take him south with them. At first they resisted; they didn't see how it could be done. Finally, the frog suggested that the two geese hold a stick in their beaks and that he would hold on to it with his mouth.

So off the unlikely threesome went, flying south over the countryside. It was quite a sight. People looked up and expressed great admiration at this demonstration of creative teamwork. Someone said, "It's

wonderful! Who was so clever to discover such a fine way to travel?" Whereupon the frog opened his mouth and said, "It was I," as he plummeted to the earth.

*Moral -  
There is no "I" in team.*



# A word from our Founder Partner

Wonderful! Mesmerizing! Uplifting! The monsoon magic is here. Nowadays I enjoy these in Delhi but was in the midst of the famous Mumbai monsoons some while back. Enchanting. It also brings out the indomitable spirit of Mumbaite, which I have pleasantly observed at our office too. With much changes happening there, they have neither lost focus nor the spirit - the RC events there are testimony. But Chennai was not far behind. While you guys watched “Not Out at 102”, Chennai watched another famous star in “Going Strong at 60”!

Congratulations are in order for our Kochi women sports team, our Transaction team for winning the best deal award at MAWW convention and to everyone at Chennai for the fabulous new office. Also, TIPS was an excellent initiative and I congratulate everyone involved for getting this going. Given the outcome and the feedback, I think we were right on track. I wish SC-TD further successes in their endeavours.

The message of “We” on the cover is the most important message. It can never be emphasized enough. The beautiful pictures depicting unity in diversity add to the meaning, as do efforts by each of you. We are what we are because we are “we”.

What a delight to read experiences of our expatriate team members, as equally Bikram’s travels into the world of 3 idiots. And so many other travel tales. What joy!

Next time you are in excitable mood, or spot another, just say the magic words “Control Uday, Control...”. Discover the power of these words and much more in your monsoon addition of connect.

Keep winning.

Best regards

AJAY SETHI

Published at New Delhi Office:

81/1, 3rd Floor, Adchini,  
Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi 110 017.  
Tel (91) (11) 4100 9999

#### Editorial and Content Team

Bikramjit Singh Bedi, Prateek Gupta,  
Mayank Goyal, Shreya Kapoor, Nikita  
Shah, Santhosh Kumar PP, Hariharan  
S, Subhashree PB, Kameshwaran G,  
Dineshkumar S, Shanjumol P K,  
Jees Jose, Sandra Silvester, Lakshmy  
Mahadevan, Athira Jaise Manual,  
Ridhima Batra, Ayushi Deora, Abdul  
Aziz, Preeti Agarwal, Naveen S  
N, Anand S Nair, Apoorva Achar,  
Dheeraj Jain G, Meghana P, Zainab  
Janab, Drashti Shah, Vanita Patolia,  
ShivangiKumari Singh, Deep Row

#### Design Team

Keshav Mishra, Siraj Ahmed &  
Sandeep Singh  
[www.asa.in](http://www.asa.in)

## ICDS-Client Walkthrough - DEL / GGN

A Client Clinic on Income Computation and Disclosure Standards (ICDS) was organised by the Assurance team in Delhi-Gurugram. The session highlighted key differences between ICDS and the existing Accounting Standards and further explained the interplay between the ICDS provisions and those of the Income Tax Act, 1961, receiving an overwhelming response from the audience.



## GST Insights in Germany

India Day was celebrated at Hannover Messe, Germany, on April 26, 2018. VDMA invited ASA to make a presentation on how GST favours manufacturing companies in India. Sunil Arora and Subroto Bose represented the firm on this occasion. The presentations were followed by a panel discussion on 'Ease of doing business in India - Sharing experience' which was highly engrossing and interactive. The panelists and the audience acknowledged the fact that doing business in India should be the buzzword for German companies planning to set shop in India.



## Workshop on ICDS Provisions

We, in association with ASSOCHAM, organised a workshop on ICDS in New Delhi. Nitin Gupta spoke on ICDS provisions and recent developments in Government Grants, Securities, Borrowing Costs, Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets. An effective presentation on each ICDS was provided covering the impact of Delhi High Court ICDS decision and Finance Act Amendments.



## @ GLANCE

## Giving Pace to Start-Ups - BLR

A session was conducted by P. Nitish in Bengaluru to make start-ups aware of our specialised services in this field. Ramprasad, Vinay, P.R. Jayakumar, Suresh, Basavaraja and Vijay familiarised the attendees with the relevant accounting and regulatory requirements including direct and indirect tax compliances. The session was very well received with audience showing a keen interest in due diligence and GST compliances.



## INDO German Business Forum - CHN

The Mechanical Engineering Industry Association (VDMA) organised the Indo German Business Forum in Chennai, where ASA was a prime sponsor. Subroto Bose took the audience through the various implications of the Goods & Service Tax (GST) on several issues including production cost, simplified supply chain, transfer of goods, single point assessment regime. This insight on GST was well received by the audience.



## Kudos for Joint Deal Award

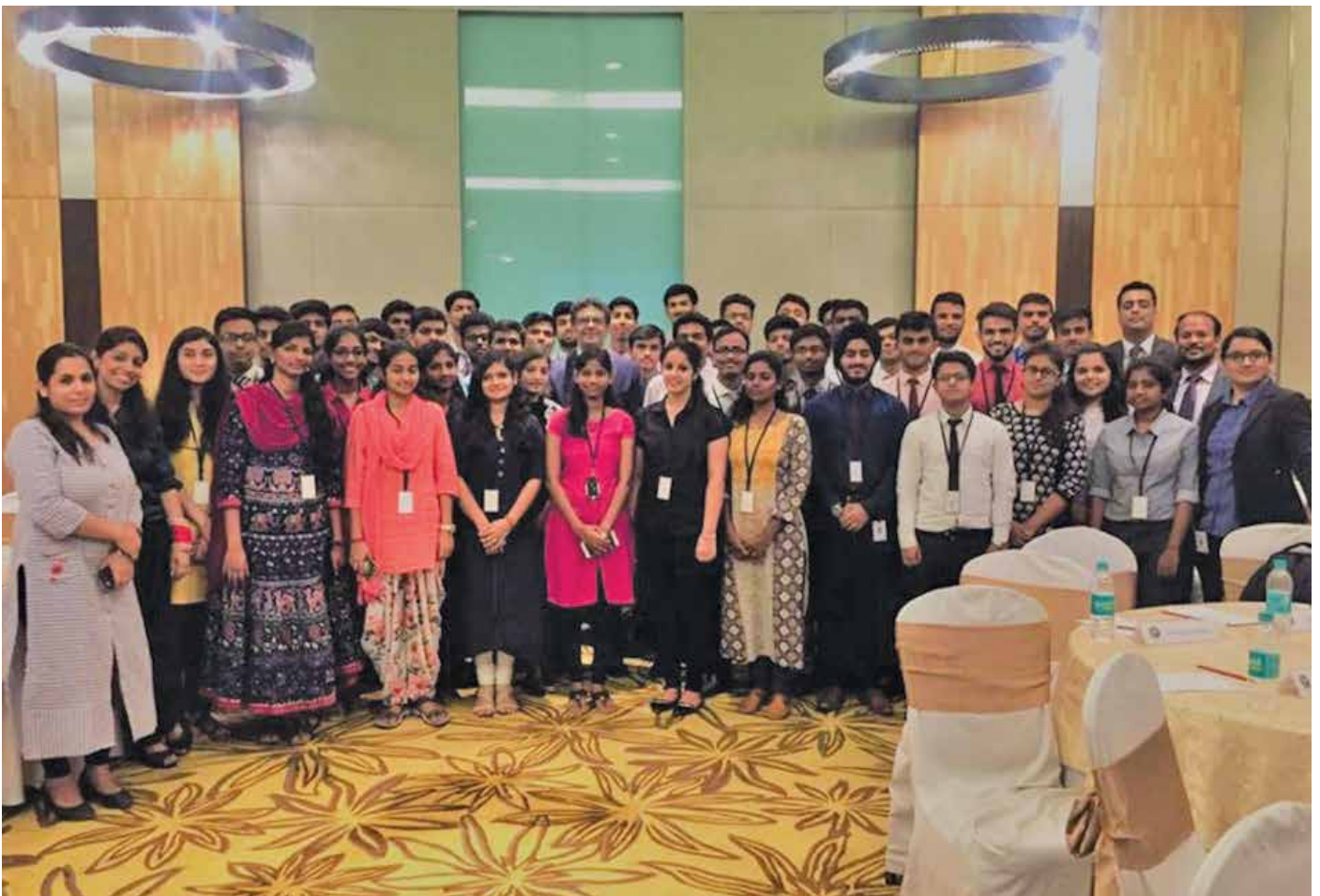
We, together with SCS Global Japan, won the best joint deal award at the M & A Worldwide spring convention at Hilton Hotel, Amsterdam. Nitin Arora received the award on our behalf.



## TECHNICAL SESSIONS

### Training and Induction for Professional Staff (TIPS) **PAN India**

SC-TD organised a two day TIPS programme at Courtyard by Marriot in Gurugram. For the first time the new inductees from all our branches were invited under a common PAN India programme. Our National Practice Heads and Partners warmly welcomed the participants and introduced respective verticals. The new staff also had an opportunity to interact with Ajay Sethi, who acquainted them with ASA CCI's journey thus far. The programme concluded with a visit to our Gurugram office.



# Staff Experiences of TIPS

## An Important Learning

It was a great opportunity to interact with so many people from different locations. All the sessions helped us to understand the work we do and where we stand. The managing team supported us to ensure our safety and comfort.

**Abhishek Choudhury,**  
Assurance, Bangalore



The TIPS workshop was extremely valuable to me. I got an opportunity to learn about various service verticals operating within ASA and it was a great occasion for me to meet and learn from our experienced mentors.

**Anchal Khurana,** Taxation, Delhi

During this session, we got to know and understand a brief about all the service verticals in ASA. We interacted with people from branches all over India. We also got valuable tips on how to conduct ourselves as a professional, and tips on positive body language. Overall, I believe that the objective of TIPS was duly met in all aspects for me and it was a great experience interacting with ASA mentors.

**Roshan Choudhary,** Taxation, Delhi



## An Experience not to be Missed!

It offered us an insight into all the verticals of both ASA and CCI. With colleagues from all parts of the country, it allowed everyone to interact and learn together. The sessions conducted by the experienced partners and directors, specially Ajay Sir's session was an enriching experience that made it worth attending. The sessions with the amazing learnings, helpful colleagues and delicious food made it a memorable and fulfilling two day programme.

**Sugandh Mishra,**  
Transaction Advisory Services,  
Gurugram



This programme offered a great opportunity to know about the functioning of our firm, the operations of different divisions and making some new friends. It was a great time to hear about the experiences of our respected seniors and gain knowledge on how to become a good professional. And not to forget about the delicious food. I wish we could attend sessions like TIPS more often!

**Nitin Gupta,** Taxation, Delhi

It was an opportunity where we were able to see our legends in person and interact with them. It was encouraging to see how these professional have come together for the growth of ASA. Thank you TIPS for such a wonderful trip.

**Bochker Chaitanya Krishna,**  
Assurance, Hyderabad

## Fantastic Experience!

Attending TIPS was an enriching experience. It was a knowledgeable session for me as I got to know about ASA. Our Partners explained the work carried out by the concerned departments. Everyone got the opportunity to interact with them and other colleagues. Great value addition pointers on personality development and business etiquettes. Overall, I had a great learning and enjoyed the delicious food.

**Vishal Rampal,**  
Accounting and Business Support, Delhi



## Jab Chennai Met Delhi!

This year's TIPS was organised on all India basis at Gurugram for two days, much to the agony of our seniors who had been hitherto attending TIPS locally. The eight of us from Chennai got to meet and befriend colleagues from branches across India. The sessions gave us a holistic view about the operations of each division, as they were taken by the National Heads themselves in addition to other experienced seniors of ASA.

It will be a sin if I fail to mention about the huge spread of lip smacking food that was served on both the days. And not to forget the fourteen varieties of desserts! How I wish we were allowed a little more time at the dining hall!

That was not all, we managed to visit few places like the Qutub Minar, India Gate, DLF Cyber city and Palika Bazar.

On the whole, it was an enriching experience scholastically with no compromise on the fun factor. Hip hip hurray to our ASA family!

**Preethi D.,** Taxation, Chennai

## The E-Way Bill - MUM

A much talked about topic of GST is the E-Way Bill. The audience was very participative and keen to know how the movement of goods would take place within India. The case studies taken up during the session brought about a discussion on how goods could be moved through horse carts etc. to avoid the generation of an E-Way Bill.

This session was well appreciated by the participants who founded very knowledgeable.



## Experiencing Expatriate Taxation - MUM

Intricacies of expatriate taxation were explained by Manali and Drashti. Jigar and Fatema Pittalwala contributed to make this a very informative session covering the fundamentals of expatriate taxation i.e. determining taxability in India and the final points to consider in deciding the same. The quizzes held during the session made it even more engrossing and a good learning exercise.



## Let Your Excel Skills Excel - BLR

An in-house Excel session was conducted in our Bengaluru office. Shivaramdas took the staff through the various functions in Excel and their application in routine work. The session had two modules, one on basic learning and the second on advanced learning. It was made interactive by providing pre-designed workbooks to each participant before the presentation which led everyone follow each function on their laptop.

The session was appreciated by all participants as it provided valuable inputs on excel sheet management.



## A Walk into Statutory and Tax Audits - KCH

An outdoor Technical Development session was organised at KMCC hall which started with a silent prayer followed by Shalini R, extending a warm welcome to all attendees. Sreevidhya V Pai and Shalini R covered the essential elements of Statutory Audits in a highly interactive and informative session. This was followed by session on Tax Audits taken by Ankitha V A. P N Ramachandran Kamath also shared his valuable knowledge and experiences. This session proved very helpful as it offered additional practical knowledge and clarified a number of issues that the participants were able to voice in this session.



## Winners of Baisakhi Quiz - DEL / GGN

In order to familiarise people with the essence of Baisakhi SC-RC organised Baisakhi Quiz. The staff enthusiastically participated in the quiz where Amit Sethi and Deepali Arora from Delhi were announced as winners.



## Winners of IPL Quiz - DEL / GGN

To mark the ever growing IPL fever among employees, SC-RC organised an IPL quiz. The quiz was a hit, with Sambhav Jain from Delhi and Susmit Das and Gurugram winning in a close competition.



## FUN AND FROLIC

### Father's Day - DEL / GGN

A father is someone you look up to no matter how tall you grow. To bring back fond memories of our childhood with our fathers, SC-RC organised a contest on Father's Day. The staff had to recreate a childhood picture of themselves with their fathers. The best recreated pictures were of Shyam Ramakrishnan and Richa Delori from Gurugram.



### Rainy Season Party - DEL / GGN

With first showers of the season marking the onset of monsoon, SC-RC treated the staff with lip smacking samosas, kachoris and everyone's favourite sweet and savoury chutneys.



## Mother's Day - DEL / GGN

Of all the gifts that life has to offer, a loving mother is greatest of them all. On Mother's Day, SC-RC felicitated all the mothers in our office for diligently fulfilling their multiple responsibilities.



### A WOW Adventure - DEL / GGN

SC-RC organised a water park retreat to beat the scorching summer heat. The outing was a refreshing change from routine. Adventurous slides and wave pool added to the thrill. Everyone enjoyed dance over loud music and relished an appetizing variety of food.



## Gleeee - BLR

The first event of the new SC -RC team commenced with an in-house event celebrating the birthdays and anniversaries of our colleagues. After cutting cakes they were gifted beautiful goodies handcrafted by the specially abled from an NGO 'Giftabled Foundation'. This was followed by a string of fun team games like flipping glasses, basket the ball, bursting balloons on each other's back and many more..!! The competitive spirit kept everybody on their toes and cheering with joy for their team members. Soon everyone sat back to relish yummy delicacies accompanied by watching some hilarious dubsplash videos made by the staff. Harsha was declared the winner with his version of "Life of a CA student"!! The evening turned out to be an occasion for everyone to come together to share happiness and positive energy.



## Yoga se Sab Kuch Hoga - MUM

To celebrate International Yoga Day and to promote the good health of our employees, the SC-TD team conducted a session "Yoga se Sab Kuch Hoga", to help the Mumbai team have a break from their daily routine. This session had two guest speakers. The first being Mr. Kamlesh Solanki, a yoga instructor with 15 years' experience. He gave everyone a holistic view of how to use yoga in our busy life, not just the yogo - asanas, but also the impact of different types of food on our systems. The second speaker was a consultant nutritionist, Mansi Padechia who covered what constituted a healthy diet and how it should be followed. The entire session was followed by delicious "Sativik Ahar" or foods in Ayurveda and Yoga literature that are considered Sattva or having the qualities of goodness, positivity, truth, wholesomeness, serenity and creativity.

## Monsoon Picnic with Tadka - MUM

The Monsoons are that time of the year when we look forward to our favourite RC event – The Monsoon Picnic. This year's monsoon trip was different. It wasn't a trek. It was "Water Kingdom", a Mumbaikar's childhood dream. We spent our day rolling down the slides, relaxing in the water and enjoying the artificial tides. To add to this experience, our conveyance and meals were also taken care of. Multi location pick-up and drops, bus entertainment, followed by delicious breakfast and mouth-watering lunch topped off a fun filled and memorable picnic.

## Beat the Heat with Pictionary - MUM

SC RC - Mumbai organised the year's first in-house "Beat the Heat" RC event, a two-hour extravaganza of fun and games, snacks and ice cream to welcome the new financial year. The participants played Pictionary competing in groups, exhibiting their artistic and deductive skills. The winning team walked away with a selection of delicious doughnuts. Afterwards, everyone enjoyed spicy hot paneer rolls with juicy fruit popsicles. A sure shot way to cool down!



## 102 Not Out - MUM

A movie screening of 102 Not Out was organised at Metro Cinema followed by delicious snacks. It was a fun event made even more enjoyable specially for our colleagues who had just returned from their exams.





## It's Movie Time - **KCH**

SC-RC held their first movie out at PVR Cinemas, LULU Mall. The movie "Swathanthriyam Ardharathriyil", a Malayalam action thriller portraying the life of a teenager who finds himself behind bars when he tries to save his woman from being involved in a criminal case. Everyone enjoyed the movie which was made memorable by the splendid birthday treat arranged by P N Ramachandra Kamath.



## Celebrations Galore - **KCH**

Special occasions such as birthdays and anniversaries are celebrated by all once in a month.



## Eid ul-Fitr Celebration - **KCH**

Eid ul- Fitr is one of the biggest festivals celebrated all across the world in full grandeur. The word Eid ul -Fitr literally means 'the festival of fast breaking'. SC-RC celebrated Eid ul-Fitr by organizing an Ifthar Party at the office. The party kick started with the Partners of Kochi branch exchanging sweets with each other followed by games.



## Vishu - **KCH**

Vishu marks the Malayalam new year, the start of the Zodiac Year and the spring equinox, thus marking the beginning of spring and celebrating an abundant harvest. The celebrations begin early in the morning, with 'Vishu Kani' a visual treat. A 'Vishu Kani', meant to represent abundance, is usually prepared with yellow flowers, money, silver and gold items, lemons, coconuts, a mirror, rice and oil lamps placed alongside

an idol of Lord Vishnu or Lord Krishna. This is followed by the ritual 'Vishu Kaineettam' where the eldest member of the family gifts money to the rest of the family members. No celebration in Kerala is complete without the traditional feast 'Sadya', a treat for the palate.

As a part of Vishu celebration a prosperous 'Vishu Kani' experience was arranged by the SC-RC team followed by distribution of 'Vishu Kaineettam'.



## Team out for Kaala!!!! - **CHN**

SC-RC organised movie outing for Kaala, the most awaited movie of the year. It was everyone's dream to catch the first day-first show and SC-RC managed to make this dream come true. The crowd in the theatre was enthusiastic and we could hear the chants of "Thalaiva" (which means sir) echoing across the theatre. The movie was beyond our expectations and every Rajni fan was thrilled with their idol's performance on screen. On the whole, we had a wonderful time watching the movie. The day ended with a special dinner together.



## All it takes is a Single Minute to Win - **HYD**

SC-RC organised a series of games to be completed in a minute. In the first game there was excitement and pressure on the player to transfer thermocol or polystyrene balls from one end of table to another using nothing but a straw in one minute. Other players did their best to distract the player on the job. The second game had competitors threading the maximum numbers of buttons using a pin. In this one too, much concentration and focus was needed while other competitors did their best to be as big a distraction as possible. The evening ended well with prizes being distributed to the winners.



## The Ultimate Iftar Experience! - **HYD**

Spreading an aura of unity and sharing, Iftar is the evening meal with which Muslims end their daily fast at the time of Maghrib (i.e. sunset) in the month of Ramadan. An exquisite feast was planned by SC-RC at Paradise – World's Favourite Biryani Point. Moments of togetherness were enjoyed while devouring the famous Haleem, the signature dish of Hyderabad Muslims during Ramadan. Not to be forgotten was the mouthwatering biryani, synonymous to Hyderabad, with a myriad of flavors that were a delight to our taste buds. The evening gave us a break from our daily routine and helped us to embrace the spirit of Ramadan.



## Leisure Time at Dream Valley! - **HYD**

SC-RC organised an exciting and fun-filled excursion to the Dream Valley Resort. The day began with playing outdoor games like cricket, tug of war which was a stress buster for all of us and a great way to bond with our seniors. Games like table tennis and badminton reminded us of our school days. Post lunch everyone moved to the pool side. We got drenched and enjoyed a rain dance. The day flew by and before we knew it, it was time for the prize distribution and to head home.



## Lebron James of ASA-Women Leading from Front - KCH

SICASA Ernakulam hosted an intra branch indoor games competition for CA Students, IMPETUS, which witnessed participation of large number of students. Events included Basketball, Badminton, Table Tennis, Carom, Chess and Volleyball in which Kochi team bagged few prizes. The prizes list topped with women emerging as champions in Basketball. The team also won the second spot in Table Tennis (Sonali Sudhir), Mens Carom (Danish Vincent) and Carom Mixed Doubles (Musliha P A and Salman Rashid). P N Ramachandra Kamath, Shalini R and Shanjumol P K ably cheered on the teams contributing to the overall spirit of victory.



## TALENT UNFOLD

### Talent Latent- Shanjumol P K

- KCH

The lively and spirited voice that greets you over the phone and the charming welcome one gets when entering our Kochi office does not reveal the artistic persona of this talented girl, Shanjumol P K. Her professional persona hides a talented dress designer, seamstress and embroiderer. A busy job and hectic family life do not leave her with too much time to let her skills flourish but her talent is abundantly evident when one looks at her work and the pride she takes in her creations. The full scope of her boundless flair for garment design and embellishment is yet to be revealed. We look forward to Shanjumol fulfilling her dreams with her talents!



# UNITY IN DIVERSITY



**BENGALURU**



**GURUGRAM**



**DELHI**



**MUMBAI**



**HYDERABAD**



**KOCHI**



## CHENNAI OFFICE MOVES TO NEW LOCATION

Unit 709 & 710, 7Th Floor, 'BETA Wing', Raheja Towers, New Number 177, Anna Salai, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600002



## RELIVE A MOMENT

### Aging is not Lost Youth, but a New Stage of Opportunity and Strength - **CHN**

On 4th June 2018, our beloved K. Venkatraman, turned 60. On his birthday, he performed a Sashti-abda-poorthi, a ceremony celebrating the 60th birthday of a person. Though he turned 60, his enthusiasm and determination towards achieving his goals has grown in proportion to his age. He is indeed a great example who proves that 'Age is just a number'.



## KNOW YOUR MATE

### Viola! - **KCH**

Sandra Silvester

Our violinist extraordinaire gave another wonderful performance at the "CA Students Talent Search". She took the second place for instrumental music and was selected for the Southern Region Level Competition to be held at Chennai. Sandra is a frequent winner at various singing and musical competitions. She is also an avid motorist and is a part of the Women's basketball team of Kochi, the Champions at SICASA, Ernakulam.



### Bundle of Joy - **DEL**



Meenakshi

Daughter of Subroto Bose  
Executive Partner

## COFFEE WITH CONNECT

# Vinay KS - BLR



### HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT BEING PROMOTED TO EXECUTIVE PARTNER?

I am grateful to all the senior leaders of the firm for trusting me, and would like to thank all of them for their support and guidance. I am also happy that this will be a motivation to all the young people in the firm who dream or aspire of making it big in ASA.

### LOOKING BACK ON YOUR JOURNEY IN ASA, WHAT DO YOU THINK WAS YOUR DEFINING MOMENT?

Since the time I joined ASA, I was very clear that this is the firm where I wanted to make my career. There were few instances when I had to talk to Ajay Sethi. The advice that he gave me during those conversations are what I consider my most defining moments in ASA.

### WHO DO YOU THINK HAS HAD THE LARGEST INFLUENCE ON THE PERSON YOU ARE TODAY AND WHY?

Definitely my parents. They are simple and very hardworking. No matter what, my mother always used to go to work even if she was not keeping well. That's one thing that has rubbed off on me as well. I am completely immersed in whatever I do. That's my priority. I don't want to miss out on anything that happens at work. They have definitely played a huge role in making me who I am today.

### WHEN YOU WERE YOUNGER WHAT DID YOU THINK YOU WERE GOING TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP?

Being an ardent Sachin Tendulkar fan, I wanted to become a cricketer and always used to play with the bigger boys in my locality, trying to showcase my talent. But my parents wanted me to take up Engineering, like any Bangalorean parent at that point in time. After my 10th, I was very clear I didn't want to take up Science. Thanks to the wonderful company in my college I got into Chartered Accountancy (CA). CA was not a very conscious plan. I was very playful at that time. I got serious about studying for my CA only after I got into it. My more ambitious and career oriented friends in college deserve the credit for me being a CA today as they were the ones who influenced my decision.

### WE ALL KNOW HOW PASSIONATE YOU ARE ABOUT CRICKET AND THE PROFESSION. APART FROM THE PROFESSION AND CRICKET, WHAT OTHER THINGS INTERESTS YOU THAT MOST PEOPLE ARE NOT AWARE OF?

I can drive non-stop with music on. Driving and Music are my stress busters. And if its Goa, then, it's just perfect.

### WHAT IS THE CRAZIEST THING YOU'VE EVER DONE TILL DATE?

My first trip to Goa was by bike when I was doing my articles. I lied to my parents and told them that I was taking the bus (and obviously not to Goa :P). I even lied to my principal saying that I was not keeping well. My friends and I drove close to 1800 kms! I had just learnt to ride a bike. That was one crazy trip!!

### IF YOU COULD GO BACK TO ANY AGE OR TIME OF YOUR LIFE AND CHANGE, WHAT IS IT THAT YOU WILL CHANGE?

I do not think I would want to change anything. There is nothing that I regret. All the experiences have been great. So, I don't want to change a thing.

### WHAT IS ONE THING THAT IRRITATES YOU THE MOST WHEN YOU ARE AT THE WORKPLACE?

The distraction of constant phone calls while working actually irritates me when I am in midst of something as it affects my focus.

### YOU ARE OFTEN REFERRED TO AS THE 'CAPTAIN COOL' OF THE TEAM YOU ARE LEADING. HOW DO YOU STAY CALM AT ALL TIMES? WHAT IS THE SECRET?

I always remember this dialogue in the movie 'No Entry' where Nana Patekar says "Control Uday, Control..." whenever he gets angry. That's on a lighter note. But this is how I am. I never shout at people. By being cool, I have always made my team comfortable, I have got the work done from my team and it's more of a Win-Win situation at both the ends. During stressful times, I have been with them and that kind of eases out the situation. This is my nature.

### WHAT IS YOUR PIECE OF ADVICE TO THE YOUNG GUYS THERE IN THE FIRM?

Stay focused and determined. Passion is what takes you a long way. When you are passionate and can channelize your efforts in the right direction, success will follow.

## TRAVEL DIARIES

### Rooftops and Flip-Flops in SLOVENIA & CROATIA by Nikita - MUM

It was one of those crazy moments when you just look at a map and point "That's where we will go!" And that is exactly how we came up with Slovenia and Croatia on a train journey to the Great Rann of Kutch.

What we did not realize was, that despite being part of EU, Croatia is NOT a part of the Schengen Zone and after a lot of inquiries and calls to the embassy, we were relieved to receive our multi-entry Schengen visa covering our travel to both Slovenia and Croatia.

Our 15 days itinerary (revered as a true piece of art!), sprawled from Bled and Triglav National Park in the north-west of Slovenia; to a day trip to Škocjan caves (a UNESCO world heritage site), Postojna caves and Predjama Castle; to an e-biking tour to Portorož and Piran in the south; traversing to the north-east corners of Celje, Maribor and Ptuj and finally returning to the centrally located capital city of Ljubljana [pronounced as lyu-blya-na].

We returned to Ljubljana on a Friday to eat our way around its Open Kitchen AKA Odprta Kuhna the most interesting European street food market!

Truth to be told, the best time to visit Slovenia is now; most backpackers/travelers haven't discovered it yet.

In Croatia, we had our eyes set on the cities of Zagreb, Zadar, Split and Dubrovnik; island hopping from Bol to Hvar; and the majestic Plitvice Lakes National Park (a wonderland of stunning waterfalls and 16 connected lakes).

We ended our journey at Dubrovnik, the perfect climax to our thrilling journey and the main filming location for King's Landing in HBO's Game of Thrones.

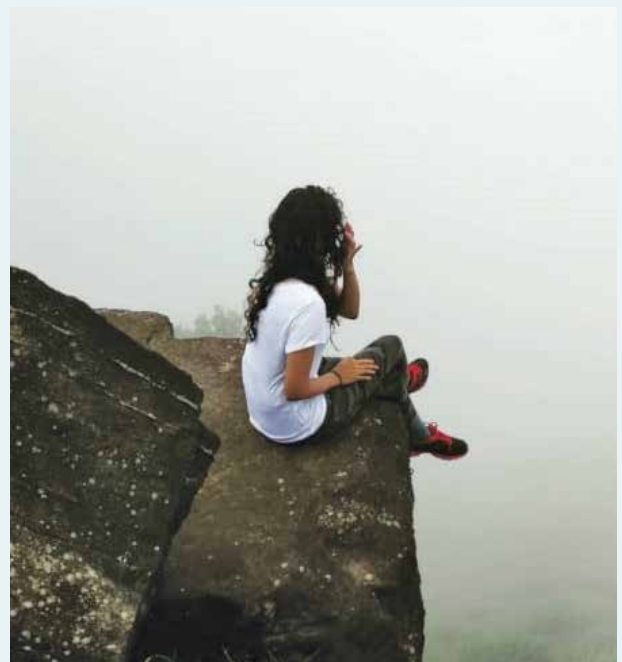
I appropriately commemorated Dubrovnik – the Pearl of the Adriatic with a GOT theme music box that now proudly sits on my desk.



### Over the Mountains and through the Woods in COORG by

Meghana - BLR

Sometimes you just need an adventure to cleanse the bitter taste of reality from your soul. The trek to Tadiandamol was one such adventure. We left Bangalore on a Friday night when it was raining cats and dogs with the promise of a storm the very next day. We hoped desperately that the storm wouldn't ruin our trek. We were a group of three – my oldest friend, my newest friend (actually a friend of my oldest friend that I met on the way) and me. We reached the homestay at Coorg, freshened up, demolished breakfast (the most important meal of the day) and summarily headed out on our adventure at 8am. Tadiandamol is the highest peak of Coorg District. As we set off from base camp, the weather Gods favored us with a serene morning and sent the storm away from Karnataka. Lush green is how I can best describe the hill. The climb uphill got steeper as we were closing in on the peak, fighting off leeches (of the non-human variety), trying not to fall while still taking in the beauty of the misty path. The fresh, crisp air at the peak left us refreshed and exhilarated. The views were breathtaking. We enjoyed our packed lunches while taking in whatever we could of those amazing panoramas. As we started our journey back down, however, our luck changed and the heavens opened up. A little dog accompanied us as our mock-guide as we struggled to make our way back down in the downpour without sliding down the wet mud. Finally reaching the starting point around 5.00 PM, we ended the trek by demolishing hot Maggi (aah Maggi!) and ended the day sharing ghost stories around a bonfire.





## My Rendezvous with LEH LADHAKH by Bikramjit Bedi - DEL

*Snow capped peaks, rugged mountainous terrain, pristine water flowing down the rivers and streams, serene lakes, cold deserts, and mystic blue sky above: all these perfectly blend together to form heaven called Leh-Ladakh!*

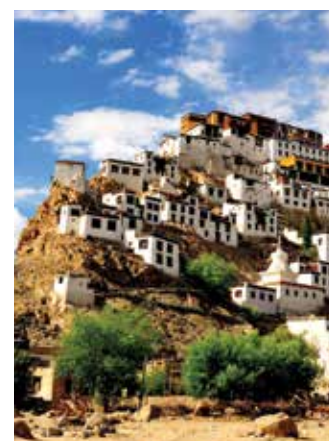
One fine day we embarked on this journey by catching an early morning Delhi flight to "Kushok Bakula Rimpochee" Airport. En-route glimpses of the mighty "Himalayas" mesmerized us. Upon setting foot on ground, mild dizziness and breathlessness welcomed us, perhaps for the adventurous high altitude days ahead. And yes, the limited connectivity with our non-routine BSNL and Airtel connections made us immediately realize life beyond cell phones. With innumerable monasteries lined up and colourful prayer flags in the town flapping in the strong wind, all giving a tranquil sense. Acclimatization became an extremely important factor here and first day was largely spent lazy soaking in the colours of the landscape. Visit to the local market flooded with stalls and shops selling artefacts and jewellery and authentic Leh food at the restaurants, was a great experience. Second day commenced with local sightseeing covering the Hemis Monastery, Thiksey Monastery, Shey Palace and the stupendous Shanti Stupa perched on a hilltop. Third day was planned for a visit to Diskit and Nubra valley via Khardungla Pass, the



highest motorable road in the world. Yes, we did tuck away an oxygen cylinder for any "breathless moments". This road had breathtaking views and showcased such a contrast over a span of a hundred kilometers with yaks and wild horses nibbling the scarce grass around. First came snow clad mountains which slowly gave way to bare mountains and then sand like a desert. The double hump camel rides on the sand dunes was a thrilling experience. The next destination was the famous Pangong Tso Lake of the "Three Idiots" movie fame. The first sight



of the lake and we were all awe-struck by the blue and green hues it reflected. Returning back to Leh we passed through equally intriguing landscapes and "Chang la", the second highest motorable road and encountered extremely challenging landslide prone areas in between. Next day took us to Alchi, Lamayuru Monastery and the famous Rancho school. We visited 'Sangam', the confluence of Zaskar and Indus River and saw the might of the Magnetic Hills where cars were moving up against the slope even in neutral position. Another memorable place was Gurudwara Pather Sahib which has a very interesting history revolving around and is very well maintained by the army serving langar all year round. Last but not the least, a visit to the 'Hall of Fame' museum which stands as a reminder of sacrifices made by our soldiers in Kargil and surrounding areas, made us feel proud of the chivalry of our armed forces. *Salute to our Saviours!*



## OUR EXPATRIATES EXPERIENCE

### The Cross Border Connect

- Yuhei Yokoyama, Japan

When I was 18 years old during my first grade of university, I travelled across India for six weeks. Despite my visits to so many countries like Central America, Middle East and Africa, India inspired me the most. That's why, now, I am here!

Having attended so many meetings and conferences with my Indian colleagues, especially the meetings with our Japanese clients, we sometimes have a hard time because of the difference of language, business custom, or way of thinking. But these difficulties never stop my Indian colleagues from understanding what Japanese people think, showing their interest to want to know more and share their goals.

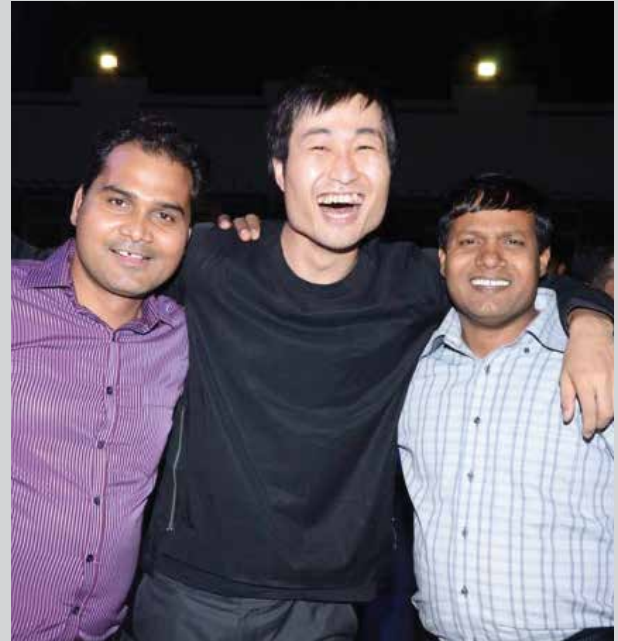
That is the most powerful behavior that I have ever seen and now I am realizing this is the cross-border Connect!

I am going to catch up with all of you soon!



### 'India Always Surprises Me'

- Takuya Yokoyama, Japan



First impression that India gave me was the presence of so many people around since Tokyo has a population of just 13 million. India has quite a unique culture which differs from Asia and Europe. Though I have been to many countries every visit to a new place in India always surprises me. Every time I find new and interesting things and it just never seems to stop. I am enjoying India's life. Talking about ASA/CCI, I enjoy working here everyday! I have been in India for more than one and a half years and my decision of coming to India was completely correct. With our 27 years of experience and excellent clientele, it is my pleasure that I can, directly and indirectly, bridge the gap between India and Japan with ASA/CCI members! I want to thank you all for giving me such precious experience.

## Expatriate <sup>(n)</sup>

An expatriate (often shortened to expat) is a person temporarily or permanently residing in a country other than that of their citizenship.

**Origin :** Mid 18th century, the word comes from the medieval Latin *ex* 'out of' and *patria* 'native country'.

## My Fascination with Indian Culture - Arthur Plenecassagne, Paris

After spending six months in Bergen (Norway), with a short transition period in Paris for only two days, I finally arrived in India to start a three month internship at CCI with the TAS team.

I quickly got used to rich and diverse Indian culture and its distinctive features particularly when compared to Europe: welcoming, open-minded and spontaneous people; bustling with life; warm and dusty weather; using cabs for every single trip in town.

Within this one month, I have met a lot of new people (both Indians and foreigners mostly from Europe) from different walks of life: ASA/CCI colleagues/coworkers, Indian friends from Norway, embassy network, etc.

In terms of places that I have visited, I focused on Delhi (historical sites) and its surroundings. I went on a one-day trip to Mathura and Vrindavan with some Danish and Austrian friends; I particularly enjoyed Kusum Sarovar sandstone monument, and a short cruise on the river Yamuna. I had very little time, for now, to visit other parts

of India. But I'm planning to travel to Himachal Pradesh, Kashmir (Ladakh), Goa and Mumbai.

Even if I miss French cuisine obviously, I find Indian food quite tasty and diverse. I especially like Vada Pav (Goli), Pista Kulfi, Chicken Biryani, Gulab Jamun, Rasgulla and Halwa. Regarding bars and restaurants, I discovered lots of them, for which I deeply recommend you to go if you haven't been: #Nofilter Café, Rose Cafe, Hauz Khas Social and Lavaash by Saby.

Thanks to my warm, welcoming and spontaneous colleagues here, my integration into my new team was fast and smooth at the same time. I already had the chance to get a better vision of how Indian market and business works, while attending meetings with big corporate clients. More generally, I had the opportunity to interact with many ASA colleagues on several occasions, for instance the TIPS orientation programme. To make it simple and short, the working atmosphere here is pleasant, serene and peaceful.

"J'aime l'Inde"



## A Place Next to Heaven - VARANASI

- Shogo Kawachi, Japan

"In India, you're taught that there are certain qualities that make you a divine human being." -Deepak Chopra

India is full of diversity in race, region, caste, language, landform, flora, fauna and so on.

My three day stay in the oldest living city i.e. Varanasi left me with a fascination for one of the most colourful places on earth with surprises around every corner. My favourite moment of the trip to Varanasi was a wonderful encounter at a festival in the evening. I was blown away by the view of the Ghats on the Ganga River glittering with more than a million lit-up earthen lamps from a rowing boat. I am definitely going back!



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