



'I wish to expedite the process of making CAs a class of matchless professionals and with that objective we will be coming up with Centres of Excellence...'

Dear Esteemed Colleagues,
A beginning, it is said, is only the start of a journey to *another* beginning. As I begin my new role as the 56th President of ICAI, I wish that the profession too makes a new 'beginning'—a new beginning with renewed vigour to scale new heights of excellence and rectitude in diverse ways. A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. Let's take that first step together and re-dedicate ourselves to our chosen profession.

Before I proceed, let me share a personal detail with you. I have risen to this position from a very humble beginning. Coming from the small town of Rohtak, I have been brought up in an ordinary middle class family and have taken all the rigours of life head on. Initially, I had intended to be a doctor and in fact had got admission to a medical college, but that was not to be. I became a chartered accountant instead and am very proud to be so. It speaks volumes for the Institute and the profession that a person from a small town and from of family of modest means is able to become its leader.

It is indeed a great honour to serve as the President of ICAI. But when I look back at the distinguished history of the Institute and its presidents who have served it with such distinction, I also feel humbled. I am extremely grateful to all members and also my colleagues in the Central Council for reposing their faith in me for leading the forward march of our profession. My new responsibility is both an opportunity and a challenge. But I hope that I will continue to enjoy your love and affection and I have no doubt that we can reach our collective goals together.

Action Plan 2008

Having ensured financial discipline in India for decades, the profession has today emerged as one of the most vibrant forces of socioeconomic growth in tune with the present era of globalisation and liberalisation. We have indeed come a long way but we still have miles to go and new frontiers to reach. As I carry the baton of Presidency, I promise to continue our tradition of excellence, integrity, ethics, independence and service to the nation in the spirit of being a partner in the task of nation building. I also look forward to enhancing the capacity, growth and quality of the profession through knowledge and practical support.

It would be my endeavour to ensure greater involvement of members in work programmes of the Institute and to

give a new thrust to research in areas of contemporary significance and to bring about greater integration of the profession with global imperatives. Establishing convergence with international standards and promoting compliance is another area of strategic focus.

I have prepared an Action Plan 2008 to achieve these and other objectives. These have been published elsewhere in this journal. I request all members to articulate their views on the Plan and help implement it in letter and spirit for the larger benefit of the profession. I have always believed that the more we work together, the more we shall achieve.

Centres of Excellence and Student Services

I wish to expedite the process of making CAs a class of matchless professionals. With that objective in view, we plan to set up Centres of Excellence where training could be provided as a part of the articleship on the lines of what is being imparted by leading management institutes. This training would be a residential course of about three months, which will involve management and communication skills, presentations, group discussions and personality development. Such training will, I am sure, put our students far ahead of those from the best of business schools anywhere. These Centres will also emerge as lead research institutions and will be a major source for the formulation of economic and financial policies not only for the corporate world but also for the country as a whole.

We have big plans to improve our existing infrastructure and transform Board of Studies as a role model having specialised wings for each of the subjects relevant to the accounting profession. Today, we have some of the best computer labs across the country and are planning to set up more this year. We are currently in the process of operationalising our e-learning facility for students throughout India. We also intend to hold classes through satellite and broadcasting network with the objective of making the CA course available to each and everyone even in remote areas. A proposal for the launching of CPT examination that can be

taken online is in the pipeline. I am sure that all these measures will make the CA course one of the most cost-effective courses providing top notch opportunities for aspirants.

Attestation Function

Society's expectations from us professionals are growing together with the growing economic activities in the country. It has held us in high esteem and trusted us for decades but we cannot take that trust for granted. We need to increase the effectiveness of our attestation function so that we can continue to enjoy the confidence the society reposes in us. We need to be more vigilant and watchful while performing our duties and we need to always strive to better our skills. Here, I am reminded of the great hockey player Major Dhyan Chand who had perfected his skills to such an extent that even the experts in hockey seeing him play on the field used to suspect whether there was a magnate hidden inside the stick so that the ball always appeared to be chasing his hockey stick rather than the hockey stick chasing the ball. We need to demonstrate the same level of perfection in discharging our attestation function and earn goodwill so that authorities feel naturally drawn to us rather than we pursuing the authorities.

Important Notification from CBDT

I am also happy that the Central Board of Direct Taxes recently notified Income-tax (Third Amendment) Rules, 2008, inserting a new Rule 14A relating to Guidelines for the purpose of determining expenses for audit under Section 142(2A) of the Income-tax Act, 1961. More details have been given elsewhere in this issue of the journal.

Bank Audit

Bank Audit, which is an important assignment for the profession, is round the corner. We need to be well prepared for it and perform the job diligently. A Guidance Note on Audit of Banks (2008 edition) is also going to be released in the first week of March 2008 to help members discharge their duties efficiently. The Continuing Professional Education Committee will also be conducting special programmes for members in this regard. Let's update the knowledge required for completing the task effectively. Help can always be sought from seniors, if necessary.

ICAI Initiatives Abroad

In one of my first major assignments after taking over as President, I attended the Government-to-Government Indo-UK Task Force on Corporate Governance Meeting held in U.K. recently. The Indian side of the Task Force was led by Mr. Anurag Goel, Secretary of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India. The Task Force has evolved a framework for facilitating Government-to-Government and Institution-to-Institution co-operation between the two countries in areas such as corporate governance, insolvency, accountancy and

sustainability development. I used this opportunity to meet the President of Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales and held extensive discussions with him on the issue of mutual recognition of qualifications.

A delegation from the French accounting profession led by Jean Pierre Alix and Mr Vincent Baillot, Presidents respectively of CSOEC and CNCC, the two accounting institutes of France visited ICAI recently to discuss measures required to facilitate mutual recognition of accountants and accountancy services in the two countries. After a detailed discussion, ICAI and the two French institutes of accounting have agreed to undertake an evaluation of respective qualifications, training etc for recognition in each other's jurisdiction.

Mr Jens Roder, President of the Institute of State Authorised Public Accountants in Denmark (FSR) also met us recently and we discussed the question of how the members of the two Institutes could come closer.

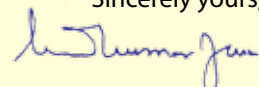
Another visitor to ICAI was Professor Mohammad Sharif Sharifi, Auditor-General, Control and Audit Office, Afghanistan. Prof Sharif has sought support from ICAI for institutionalisation of accounting profession in Afghanistan.

Diamond Jubilee Celebration

I feel proud to inform you that on 1st of July 2008, the ICAI will be starting its diamond jubilee celebrations. The celebrations which will mark the Institute's entry into the 60th year of its existence will present the proud moments of achievements of the profession in the past and will put the profession in the present and future perspectives. We will anchor in a celebration befitting the big occasion and fondly recall the history of profession, the milestones crossed and the yeomen service rendered to the nation. The world at large should look upon ICAI with pride. I call upon all of you to make the celebrations successful and an event to remember.

Dear colleagues, the affection showered and the confidence reposed in me have been the source of my strength while serving the Institute. Your love and affection energises me and gives me strength and zeal to work more aggressively for the cause of the profession. I am quite confident that your involvement in various initiatives of the Institute will give me further impetus to put in more energy and to take the profession to new heights. This is a joint endeavour. I seek your involvement and enterprising ideas to translate the dream and the Action Plan 2008 as well into a reality. Let us march together. It has been rightly said: 'Talent wins games, but teamwork wins championship.'

Sincerely yours,



CA. Ved Jain

New Delhi, 22nd February, 2008