

CONNECT



*Gen Zen: Calm Minds.
Clear Purpose. Bold Impact.*

Quarterly Newsletter of ASA

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The Real Flex of Gen Z

It starts like any other morning—alarm snoozed, notifications buzzing, deadlines waiting. Somewhere between the first sip of coffee and the endless scroll, a quiet thought crosses the mind—“Is this what success is supposed to feel like?”

For years, success came with a fixed definition—move fast, work harder, never pause. But Gen Z chose to see it differently. Instead of blindly chasing, this generation paused, questioned, and redefined what it truly means to succeed.

Across the world, young achievers are already living this new narrative. Emma Chamberlain built a global brand not by being perfect, but by being authentic. Iga Świątek continues to dominate tennis with calm focus, proving that a balanced mind can outperform pressure. Greta Thunberg leads global conversations with quiet conviction, showing that impact doesn't always need noise. And Ben Francis built a billion-dollar brand while staying rooted in purpose and culture.

Different journeys, different paths - but one common truth: they didn't lose themselves while chasing success. Closer home, the story looks familiar. It's in choosing to log off on time, in taking a chai break that resets your day, in saying “no” without guilt, and in protecting your peace while still pushing your limits. Because Gen Z understands

that success is not just about reaching a destination - it's about how you feel along the way.

This is where Zen comes in. Not as an escape from ambition, but as its balance. Zen is not about slowing down completely; it's about slowing down intentionally. It lives in small moments—a quiet walk after a long day, a deep breath before hitting “send,” a laugh shared with colleagues that makes everything lighter. It's the ability to stay grounded in a world that constantly pushes you to rush.

Gen Z is not stepping away from ambition - they are redefining it. They are building careers, creating impact, and chasing big goals, but not at the cost of their well-being. They are setting boundaries, choosing flexibility, and valuing clarity over chaos.

Because today, the real flex isn't just success - it's success that feels good.

This is the story of a generation that still wants to win but refuses to lose itself in the process. A generation that blends hustle with healing, goals with gratitude, and ambition with awareness.





A WORD FROM OUR MANAGING PARTNER

There is an old Sanskrit saying *sanaih pantha*, the gradual path. Not slow for the sake of slow, but deliberate. Intentional. Thirty-five years of this firm has been a journey walked steadily, and with purpose.

That quiet wisdom runs through almost every page of this edition - and it feels a true reflection of where we stand today.

Our Gen Z colleagues made a rather convincing case. It is de-stressing going through their stories, reflections and the catchy photo contest captions. But beneath the wit lies something genuinely admirable: a generation that refuses to equate exhaustion with commitment. Path to *Ikigai*?

The leadership offsite near Bangalore brought together 125 energetic minds full of ideas. Inspiring. This period also marked a milestone. We launched our new Pune office, now home to 100+ new colleagues. Alongside, we inaugurated our new Gurgaon office. And, the feather in the proverbial cap, we hosted the Baker Tilly APAC managing Partner meet in Delhi along with our 35th anniversary dinner. This was one of those moments that reminded how far we have come - conversations across markets, two significant book launches, meaningful media engagement, and a reaffirmation of trust that felt both strategic and deeply personal. Honestly, 2026 so far has just flown by in a blur.

Dwell further. A partner who feels like an excel error message. The ASA Premier League in Bangalore. Suryansh on unlearning. Pavithra on building beyond 35. Simran on change through intention rather than noise. Léa's ever inspiring travelogues. An ode to Manasa's leadership.

Thirty-five years on, we are not just building a firm - we are shaping something that outlasts any one of us. Evolving, energetic, occasionally unpredictable, but always anchored in trust.

Forward, always.

Ajay Sethi

EVENTS AND WEBINARS

CAE Roundtable 2026 – IIA Madras Chapter

Giridharan D K participated as a panelist at the CAE Roundtable 2026 organized by The IIA – Madras Chapter, discussing the evolving mandate of internal audit, emphasizing its expanding role in governance, risk oversight, and value creation beyond traditional assurance.



KIZUNA: Indo-Japan Intellectual Conclave

Ajay Sethi chaired a session on scaling semiconductor engagements in North-East India, bringing together policymakers, industry leaders, and Japanese partners to discuss ecosystem development and strengthening India-Japan collaboration in semiconductor manufacturing.



Times of India Budget Dialogues 2026

Ajay Sethi participated in The Times of India Budget Dialogues – March Towards Viksit Bharat, sharing perspectives with industry leaders on how Budget 2026 supports inclusive, technology-driven, and sustainable growth toward India's developed nation ambitions.



TECHNICAL EVENTS

Doing Business in India – ESD NY India Trade Mission

Kim Collaco and Harshit Mehta spoke at the ESD NY India Trade Mission organized by the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce, India, sharing practical insights on market entry, opportunities, and key considerations for consumer goods and industrial sectors.



Shri Ram Conquonomics 2026 – SRCC

Gaurav Bhatia participated as a judge at Shri Ram Conquonomics 2026, hosted by The Economics Society, SRCC, where Baker Tilly ASA India was the Knowledge Partner, evaluating ideas on AI based on clarity, practicality, and actionable impact.



India-EU FTA: Opportunities Ahead

Subroto Bose and Akshay Deodhar of ASA shared an overview of the India-EU FTA, highlighting how improved market access and sectoral liberalisation could boost exports, strengthen services, and accelerate growth for MSMEs.



Navigating FDI into India

Himanshu Srivastava, in his latest article, unpacked key amendments under Press Note 2 of 2026, covering beneficial ownership thresholds, approval triggers, and new DPIIT reporting obligations, offering critical insights for businesses navigating the evolving cross-border investment landscape.

Virtual Presence vs. Tax Presence

Ameet Baid, Varti Shah, and Lathika Jain in their article “Virtual Presence Isn’t Tax Presence,” analysed a key High Court ruling, reaffirming that remote services alone do not create a Service PE without physical presence under tax treaties.



TECHNICAL EVENTS



Evolving Investor Priorities in India

Ajay Sethi shared perspectives on how global investors are prioritizing ecosystem depth over assembly-led manufacturing, highlighting the importance of value chain integration and positioning India for its next phase of sustainable growth.



Intricacies of the Labour Codes

Badri Narayanan and Rajiv Arya led a session on "Intricacies of the Labour Codes," covering key provisions, compliance considerations, and practical insights, including the 50% wage rule, provisioning impact, and tighter timelines, helping navigate the evolving labour law framework.



FICCI Business Delegation to Japan

Himanshu Srivastava joined the FICCI Business Delegation to Japan, engaging with government and industry leaders across Kumamoto, Fukuoka, and Tokyo, strengthening India-Japan ties through strategic discussions with key officials and industry stakeholders.



Session on Transfer Pricing Post Budget 2026

Sunil Arora, Ashwath Pai, and Priyanka Ahuja led a session on "Transfer Pricing Post Budget 2026," highlighting emerging risks, evolving documentation requirements, and strategic implications, while equipping businesses to navigate cross-border complexities and heightened regulatory scrutiny effectively.



Investor Confidence in Stable Markets

Francesca Lagerberg and Ajay Sethi, in a conversation with Times Internet, discussed why global investors are increasingly gravitating toward stable and trusted markets, highlighting the importance of resilience, transparency, and long-term confidence in investment decisions.

TECHNICAL EVENTS



Annual Partner Manager Meeting 2026 – Bengaluru

Leaders came together for the Annual Partner Manager Meeting 2026 in Bengaluru, engaging in discussions, alignment sessions, and team activities, fostering stronger connections and returning with renewed clarity and direction.



Decoding Union Budget 2026 – CII Mysuru Session

Devalla Ramprasad and Ashwath Pai led a post-Budget session on “Decoding Union Budget 2026,” partnering with CII Mysuru, sharing perspectives on the economic outlook and key implications across Direct and Indirect Tax.



Launch of Pune Office

Ajay Sethi, Rajiv Arya, Parveen Kumar, Sunil Arora, Himanshu Srivastava, Nitin Arora, Rahul Khasnis, Akshay Deodhar, Atul Bhate, and Kiran Bhagwat came together for the launch of Pune office, fostering meaningful conversations, strengthening relationships, and marking an important step in expanding the firm’s presence in the city.

Indo-French Innovation Engagement New Delhi

Sunil Arora and Léa Parmentier attended a reception at the Embassy of France in New Delhi, welcoming the official delegation accompanying the French President, marking a step forward in strengthening Indo-French innovation and strategic collaboration.

CPA Australia Roundtable – Delhi

Himanshu Srivastava spoke at the CPA Australia Roundtable – Delhi, sharing perspectives on future-ready finance leadership, with a focus on trust, technology, and talent shaping the profession’s evolving landscape.



Baker Tilly APAC Managing Partner Meet 2026 - New Delhi

The APAC Meet 2026 in Delhi brought together leaders and teams from across the network for meaningful discussions around collaboration, growth, and the future of the network. Over the course of the gathering, conversations moved beyond business agendas — creating space for shared learning, stronger relationships, and cross-border alignment.

APAC Leadership Sessions

Focused discussions around market priorities, collaboration opportunities, and the evolving business landscape across the APAC region.



Press Conference & Book Launch: Doing Business in India

CNBC, ANI, PTI, Economic Times, and Zee Business came together for the launch of *Doing Business in India* — a practical guide offering experience-led insights for global businesses navigating India's evolving investment and business landscape.



35th Year Celebration

Bringing together clients, partners, and friends of the firm, the Leadership Networking Evening was shaped by meaningful conversations, shared experiences, and lasting connections. The evening also marked the launch of *Wisdom of Trust*, commemorating 35 years of the firm and the values that continue to define its journey — trust, intent, and continuity.





Partner & Team Growth Workshop

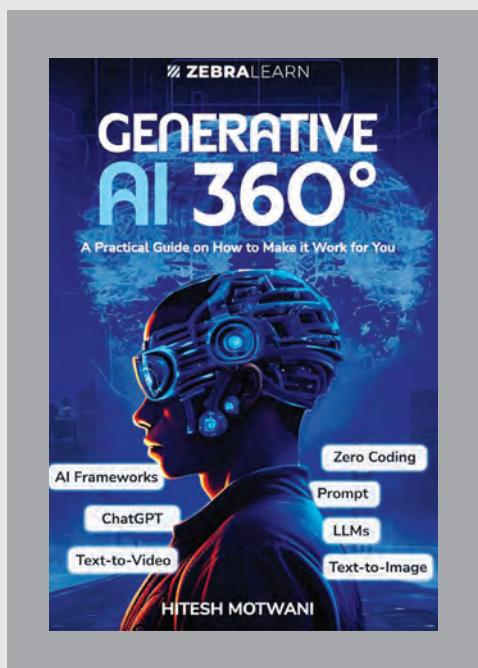
The two-day Partner & Team Growth Workshop brought together firm leadership for discussions around business growth, strategic thinking, and stronger collaboration across teams. Focused and forward-looking, the sessions reflected the shared vision driving the firm ahead.

Experiencing India

For many of our global guests, this was their first visit to India. Alongside business discussions, they experienced the culture and heritage of the country – from India Gate and Lodhi Garden to the timeless beauty of the Taj Mahal in Agra.



Generative AI 360° – Hitesh Motwani



Practical Guide to ChatGPT, Midjourney & AI Tools to Boost Productivity & Creativity

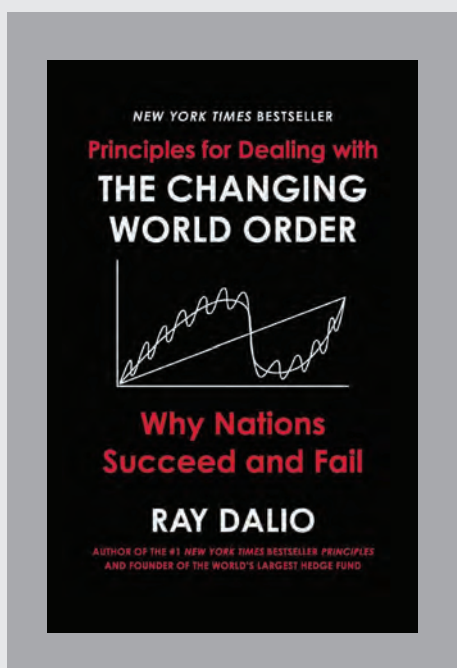
Generative AI 360: Practical Guide to ChatGPT, Midjourney & AI Tools to boost Productivity & Creativity by Hitesh Motwani arrives at a time when curiosity about artificial intelligence is high, but clarity on its practical use is often missing. This book bridges that gap with refreshing simplicity and purpose. Rather than overwhelming readers with technical depth, Motwani takes a grounded approach—guiding beginners and non-technical professionals through the evolving landscape of generative AI

with confidence and ease. The tone remains accessible throughout, making even complex ideas feel intuitive and immediately usable. What sets the book apart is its strong focus on application. Instead of treating AI as a distant concept, it positions tools like ChatGPT and Midjourney as everyday productivity companions. Through structured explanations, visual walkthroughs, and real-life examples, readers are shown how to integrate these tools into routine work.

The sections on prompt engineering are particularly valuable, demonstrating how the quality of input directly shapes output—an insight that feels both simple and transformative. For professionals, especially in consulting roles, this becomes a powerful lever to enhance efficiency and deliver sharper, faster results. Another strength lies in its relevance to real-world business scenarios. Motwani doesn't just explain what these tools can do—he shows where and why they matter. From automating repetitive tasks to enhancing creative output, the book consistently ties AI capabilities to tangible outcomes.

It also acknowledges the challenges of adoption, offering practical solutions and setting realistic expectations. The inclusion of ethical considerations adds further depth, ensuring readers understand not just how to use AI, but how to use it responsibly. The book flows with a clear sense of progression—starting with foundational understanding, moving into tools and techniques, and culminating in applied use cases. This continuity keeps the reader engaged while steadily building confidence. It feels less like a manual and more like a guided journey into a new way of working. In essence, Generative AI 360 is not just about learning tools—it is about reshaping mindset. It empowers readers to move from hesitation to experimentation, and from experimentation to meaningful impact. For consulting teams and professionals navigating the shift towards AI-enabled workflows, this book serves as both a starting point and a reliable companion, turning possibility into practice with clarity and purpose.

The Changing World Order – Ray Dalio



(A book that quietly makes you question everything you thought was "permanent")

When someone who has spent decades studying markets and cycles like Ray Dalio writes about the rise and fall of nations, it is worth paying attention. Ray Dalio, founder of Bridgewater Associates, brings a rare combination of investor insight and historical perspective to this book.

Some books give you information. Some give you perspective. And then there are books like this which make you slightly uncomfortable... in a good way.

Ray Dalio doesn't try to predict the future in a dramatic, headline-grabbing way. Instead, he does something far more powerful as he shows you patterns. Patterns distilled from over 500 years of history, observed across nations, empires, and economies, and explained with surprising simplicity. What makes this particularly compelling is that once you begin to see these patterns, they are hard to ignore. In fact, you start noticing them everywhere, sometimes even in places you would rather not.

At its core, the book explains how nations rise, dominate, overextend, and eventually decline not because of a single crisis, but due to the steady buildup of predictable forces such as rising debt, widening wealth gaps, growing internal divisions, and external competition. What is striking is how these are not abstract concepts from history, but patterns that feel increasingly visible in the world around us today.

What makes the book particularly compelling is how Dalio connects historical cycles like the rise and fall of the Dutch, British, and American empires to what we are witnessing today. It actually gets interesting now. I had the opportunity to read this book shortly after its publication, and what has stood out since is how its core ideas have continued to be reinforced through Dalio's subsequent writings and commentary. Revisiting these concepts today, the relevance feels even more striking. Many of the developments we see unfolding globally seem to align closely with the patterns he outlines almost as if the framework has quietly been playing out in real time.

Beyond 35

In a world that moves fast and forgets faster, staying relevant for 35 years isn't just a milestone—it's a mindset. This is not just a firm. It's a place where journeys begin... and continue.

Where someone once walked in as an intern, unsure and exploring, and today stands as a Partner or Executive Partner, shaping the future they once imagined. That's the real story—growth that stays, not just comes and goes. GEN-ZEN isn't about chasing titles. It's about building something meaningful, step by step, with clarity and calm. It's about learning, unlearning, and growing with purpose, not pressure. At ASA, success isn't measured in years alone, but in people who stayed, evolved, and led.

In a culture where ambition is thoughtfully balanced with well-being, and high performance is guided by perspective, individuals are empowered to grow sustainably, make meaningful contributions, and navigate success with clarity, purpose, and resilience. Because when you build with intent, trust, and continuity, milestones aren't endpoints—they're just quiet reminders that you're on the right path.

Pavithra Devi, RAS [GGN]



Beyond Hustle: The Rise of GEN-ZEN

GEN-ZEN is all about finding meaning without losing yourself in the process. It's a mindset where work is driven by purpose and real impact, not just titles or paychecks.

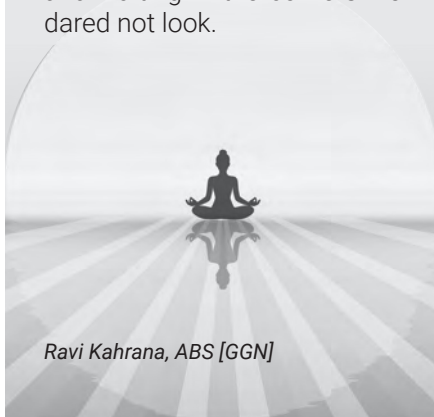
This generation cares deeply about balance, mental peace, & well-being, knowing that success doesn't feel like success if it comes with burnout. GEN-ZEN believes in quiet leadership—leading with empathy, listening more, and supporting others instead of dominating the room.

There's also a strong willingness to unlearn old rules that no longer work, like rigid schedules or outdated hierarchies, and replace them with flexible, trust-based ways of working.

Technology and AI are seen as helpful tools, not distractions, used mindfully to make life easier and work more meaningful. Personal growth matters just as much as professional growth, with constant self-discovery shaping how individuals evolve over time.

Above all, GEN-ZEN values culture, inclusion, and a sense of belonging, where everyone feels seen, heard, and respected. It's a generation choosing progress with peace, ambition with awareness, and success with humanity. Something was there—not of this world, silent and waiting in the corners we dared not look.

Ravi Kahrana, ABS [GGN]



More Than the Finish Line

In this whirlwind of chaos,
This maze we call life,
Do you give some thought,
To do what is right?

Why do some win,
And why do some lose?
What is the yardstick of
measure,
What benchmark do we
choose?

Is it success and money,
Power and fame?
Or passion and heart,
To play a fair game?

Empathy fades when you're
running the race,
Towards a finish line undefined,
The goals grow bigger, the road
grows longer -
At every turn, ask yourself,
Are you still being kind?

Are you lifting others,
In the best way you can?
Not everything is perfect,
Or goes according to plan

Do you allow yourself,
and others,
The space to make mistakes?
For teamwork is a seesaw
of give and take

With feet on the ground,
And dreams taking flight,
Pause and reflect -
How will you choose what
is right?

Netra Prakash, RAS[CHN]

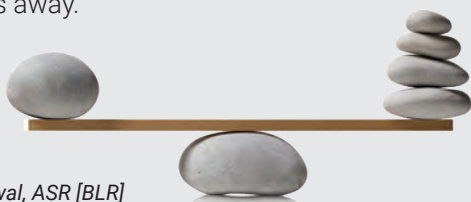


Not Finding Balance, But Uncovering It

Reading *The Quantum and the Lotus* by Matthieu Ricard and Trinh Xuan Thuan gently shifted how I think about balance. Not through answers, but through a different way of looking. By bringing modern physics and Buddhist reflection into conversation, the book points toward a simple but often resisted idea. Change is not a disruption of life; it is its natural movement.

We usually associate balance with stability. We look for it in routines, predictability, and emotional control. Yet, both science and inner observation suggest that certainty is rare. Outcomes shift. Attention alters experience. What unsettles us is often not instability by itself, but the quiet hope that things should eventually settle. What becomes visible over time is how much energy is spent maintaining this hope. The mind stays alert, watchful, slightly tense, waiting for conditions to improve before relaxing. In that waiting, well-being is postponed. Mental peace is treated as something provisional, dependent on circumstances. Seen this way, well-being takes on a different meaning. Mental peace does not arrive once complexity reduces. It appears when the mind stops insisting that complexity disappears. Pressure remains, but it no longer scatters attention. Balance begins to feel less like a careful arrangement, and more like inner alignment.

This shift changes how effort is experienced. Work continues, but with less internal friction. Reactions soften, without being suppressed. Engagement remains, but without the constant sense of being internally pulled in different directions. Calm, when it appears, feels natural rather than pursued. Well-being, in this sense, is not something added to life. It is not cultivated through control or constant adjustment. It is what becomes visible when unnecessary strain falls away. Balance is not something you try to create; it is what remains when unnecessary struggle falls away.



Suryansh Jaiswal, ASR [BLR]

The Courage to Unlearn

There are moments in our work-life journey when we realize that the habits we once followed so faithfully no longer support the person we are becoming. Unlearning, then, becomes an act of quiet courage—an inward step toward lighter, more mindful ways of working.

Letting go of old beliefs that equated productivity with staying late, replying instantly, or filling every minute on a timesheet is a challenging task in today's corporate life. Those norms once felt necessary, even admirable. But today, they feel heavy—sometimes limiting the creativity, presence, and balance that modern work truly needs.

In this shift, I am discovering the value of embracing flexibility without guilt, focusing on outcomes instead of hours, and allowing myself the space to think, pause, and breathe. The rigid timesheet mindset often reduced work to numbers rather than impact. Letting go of that has opened room for more trust, more purpose, and more authentic contribution.

The more I unlearn, the more I see work not just as a responsibility, but as a place for growth and thoughtful intention. I'm learning that empathy can coexist with efficiency, that boundaries can support brilliance, and that calm minds can create bold impact.

Unlearning isn't loud. It's gentle. But it changes everything.

It brings us closer to ways of working that feel human, balanced, and deeply aligned with who we truly are.



Sakshi Agrawal, ABS [GGN]

The Silent Revolution

Changing the world—not with noise, but with intention.

In a world addicted to urgency, choosing intention is an act of quiet rebellion. We have been conditioned to believe that speed equals success and noise equals relevance—but the most meaningful impact often grows in stillness. Purpose-driven work is not about filling calendars; it is about fulfilling contribution. When actions align with values, effort transforms into energy, and productivity feels less like pressure and more like purposeful momentum.

Balance is not something we “find” one day—it is something we practice, like breathing. A calm mind is a competitive advantage in a distracted world. It allows us to pause between stimulus and response, where wisdom lives. Quiet leadership, grounded in empathy and awareness, does not demand attention—it earns trust. And trust is the soil where innovation takes root. The future belongs not to the loudest voices, but to the clearest minds.

We are also courageously unlearning outdated narratives: that exhaustion proves commitment, that hierarchy defines worth, that technology must accelerate us endlessly. Mindful tech and AI, used with awareness, become amplifiers of human potential rather than replacements for it—removing friction so creativity can flow. Progress, after all, is not about doing everything faster; it is about doing the right things better.

Growth rarely arrives with applause. It appears in quiet decisions—setting boundaries without guilt, asking questions without fear, redefining success as alignment rather than achievement alone. Inclusion and belonging are built the same way: through consistent, conscious choices that make people feel safe enough to be both capable and human.

Gen + Zen is more than a theme; it is a philosophy of sustainable excellence. When calm minds anchor clear purpose, bold impact stops being a sprint toward burnout—and becomes a journey of becoming



Simran Nayal, GOS

Where Culture Meets Belonging

From a Gen Z perspective, culture, inclusion, and belonging are not abstract ideals or corporate buzzwords—they are everyday experiences that shape how people feel, perform, and grow. Culture is reflected in how leaders behave, how teams communicate, and how values are practiced during both good and challenging times. For Gen Z, a strong culture is one that is transparent, ethical, and purpose-driven, where actions consistently align with words.

Inclusion, to Gen Z, goes far beyond diversity metrics or symbolic representation. It means equitable opportunities, active listening, and meaningful participation in decision-making. An inclusive environment recognizes that people come from different backgrounds, identities, and life experiences, and it adapts to those differences rather than expecting everyone to fit into a single mold. Gen Z values workplaces and communities where individuality is respected, biases are addressed openly, and feedback flows both ways.

Belonging is the emotional outcome of culture and inclusion done right. It is the sense of psychological safety that allows individuals to express ideas, ask questions, and make mistakes without fear of judgment or exclusion. For Gen Z, belonging also includes support for mental well-being, flexibility in how work is done, and acknowledgment of life beyond professional roles. When people feel they truly belong, they are more engaged, creative, and motivated.

Ultimately, Gen Z believes that culture, inclusion, and belonging are interconnected and non-negotiable. They define not only where Gen Z wants to work or engage, but also the kind of impact they want to create—spaces where everyone feels valued, empowered, and inspired to contribute authentically.



Arun Jaju, ASR [HYD]

GEN Z PHOTO CONTEST



Corporate walk, but make it futuristic

Shivpriya Satti, GOS



At the Teapot Cafe in Rakkar on the first day of 2026.

Netra Prakash, RAS [CHN]



Grounded in clarity. Moving with intention

Akhil M R, ABS [KCH]



Caught in 4k blooming harder than my situationship

Prashant Kumar, ABS [GGN]



The bus ride home felt different this time with hope quietly sitting beside her. When her dream of writing seemed distant, her friend quietly believed for both of them. One meeting, one chance, and her words finally found a place. Holding her first opportunity close, she smiled, realizing dreams grow stronger when friendship carries them to life.

Monisha Mohanan, ABS [KCH]

One quiet evening after reconciling numbers, I realized not everything meaningful can be balanced. A missed deadline and small error taught me: growth lies in patience, clarity, and owning mistakes. I stopped chasing perfection and started valuing consistency, integrity, and effort—knowing real progress is quiet, intentional, and built daily through small, honest improvements that truly shape who we become.

Simran Nayal, GOS

During my first audit, I rushed through a sample just to meet the deadline. I assumed a balance was correct without proper verification. During review, my senior caught the inconsistency. It was a small error, but it mattered. That day, I learned in assurance, nothing is “minor.” Since then, I focus more on evidence than speed.

Akkshay Sriram RS, ASR [CHN]

Turning to the Bhagavad Gita for guidance changed my outlook on life. It helped me realise that we truly own nothing, and material attachments are temporary. We are here for a short time, so I’ve learned to live wisely, appreciate life’s beauty, and focus on finding and fulfilling my purpose with clarity and peace.

Sumit Ojha, TAX [BLR]

I once chased big wins, believing success had to be loud and visible. One quiet evening, I helped a colleague meet a deadline without recognition. That night felt lighter. I realized growth is often invisible, shaped in small, consistent choices where we show up, do what’s right, and quietly become someone we respect every day. Sometimes, the most meaningful progress happens in ways that go unseen, yet define who we are becoming.

Amey Patil, RAS [MUM]

I used to wait for the “perfect moment” like it’s running late or stuck in traffic. But Attack on Titan made it clear—there is no perfect time, just doing the thing anyway. Fear shows up, doubt too. Fine, they can come. Shinzou wo Sasageyo—give your heart, hit the deadline, and keep moving forward, even if you’re slightly panicking inside. Tatakae!!! Tatakae!!! Keep moving forward.

Sivaramakrishnan V, ASR [CHN]

A big win/realisation in life, rather than a small one - no matter how dedicated or sincere you are, rewards are not guaranteed. So keeping expectations, either from life, people or circumstances only brings disappointment. Life never promises to be just, people and their opinions keep changing and circumstances are beyond anyone's control. Give your 100%, let things unfold.

Pragya Bansal Tax [DEL]

Every morning, I chased big goals, ignoring small progress. One day, I noticed a tiny plant growing through concrete outside my office. No rush, no noise - just steady growth. It changed me. I realized success isn't always loud or fast, it's consistent and patient. Since then, I grow quietly, trusting that small steps can break even the strongest barriers.

Rishabh Omar, GOS

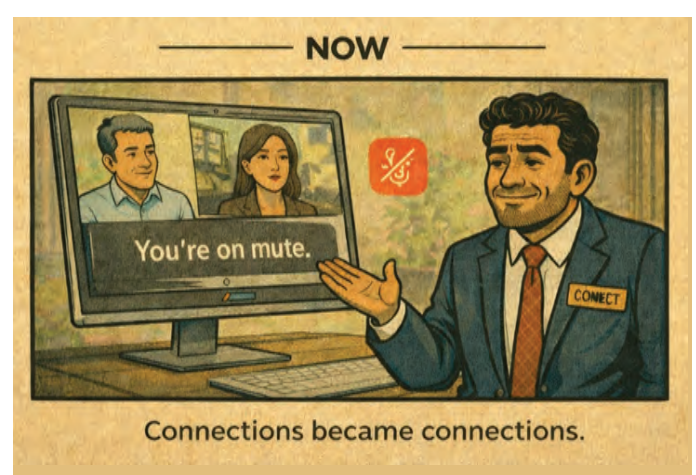
I have always had this one question, "What's the purpose of life?". The answer varied at different life phases. I had a dream, once I achieved that my purpose would be fulfilled. It felt like that's everything I ever needed. I never asked myself, "What after that?" until I watched this movie named 'Soul'. It completely changed my perspective towards life. The movie ended with a strong note, "The purpose of life is to live every moment of it and celebrate it!"

Akash K, ASR [CHN]

My aim isn't just a title, but a "True and Fair View" of myself. Beyond rules and codes, I seek reconciled balance within. To lead with empathy, speak lightly, live honestly and ensure when life gets audited, the accounts show surplus assets of laughter, kindness, clear intentions with zero liabilities.

Prachi Jain, ASR [DEL]

Client Meetings: Then Vs Now



At the Heart of the Silk Road

Uzbekistan. Not typically exactly a destination that sparks instant enthusiasm. Let's be honest: countries ending in "-stan" rarely top travel wish lists. Yet, I decided to challenge the clichés and follow the ancient Silk Road through one of Central Asia's most fascinating countries. And what a surprise!



After landing in Tashkent, the capital, I explored its impressive remnants of Soviet architecture, including the iconic Hotel Uzbekistan, a concrete giant straight out of another era. Then came a 14-hour overnight train ride, aboard an old-school Soviet sleeper train, heading to Khiva. Often skipped due to its remoteness, Khiva ended up being my absolute favourite. Its historic inner city, Ichan Kala, entirely UNESCO-listed, feels like walking through a real-life Arabian Nights tale. Wandering aimlessly through its narrow streets, surrounded by ochre walls, turquoise-tiled minarets, madrassas and mausoleums, especially at sunrise and sunset, was pure magic.



Next stop: Bukhara, once a major Silk Road trading hub and still a centre of Uzbek craftsmanship. Lively yet peaceful, it is packed with stunning monuments and an undeniable old-world charm. Then came Samarkand, a city best explored with your head tilted upwards. Turquoise domes, glittering ceramics, towering minarets... architectural overload in the best possible way. The Registan, once the crossroads of global trade, remains the showstopper. Framed by three colossal madrassas, it's easy to understand how this architectural masterpiece is said to have inspired the Taj Mahal itself.

To escape the urban buzz, I ended my journey in the mountains, staying with a local family. Hiking, homemade food, and absolute calm recharged my batteries.

Lea Parmentier, ES [DEL]

Amidst the Clouds

During our Christmas break, we decided to go on a short trek, and the first place that came to our minds was Mullayanagiri Peak. It had been on bucket list ever since we started planning the trip, and honestly, the choice did not disappoint us.

We started early from our hotel and headed towards the Baba Budan Giri range around 7:00 AM. It was hardly a half-hour journey. The jeep ride itself was an experience—the road leading to the foothills was unbelievably beautiful. We could already see the fog settling at the base of the hills. As they say, Maggi in the hills hits different—and after tasting it there, we couldn't agree more.

We then began our trek, and with every step, the view kept getting better. It took us about an hour to reach the peak, and the final view was worth it. We stood there, gazing at the mountains that seemed to touch the sky. It was cold, yet the warm rays of the sun fell gently on us. The fog and clouds brushing past us created a perfect picture moment.

Mullayanagiri Peak is one of the tallest peaks in Karnataka, standing at around 6,300 feet above sea level. At the peak, there was a popular photo point. Behind it, however, was a narrow path that led to two small caves. After a moment of hesitation, we decided to explore one of them. As we moved inside, the cave grew darker, but unexpectedly, there was nothing inside.

The hill also has a small gadduge. It is believed that it was once connected through the caves, though the passage is now blocked by the priest. We paused for two minutes and unwind ourselves before starting the descent.



Gomathy Iyer – ASR [CHN]

Andaman & Nicobar | Where Blue Meets History, Adventure, and Us

Our journey began in Port Blair, where postcard-blue waters contrast with a past etched in courage and suffering. Beaches and lively local markets brought island calm, but the most powerful experience awaited inside the Cellular Jail, infamously known as Kala Pani.

Derived from “Kaal Pani” (time or death + water), the term symbolised social and spiritual death. Being sent across the sea meant permanent separation from family, identity, and society - punishment far harsher than imprisonment itself.

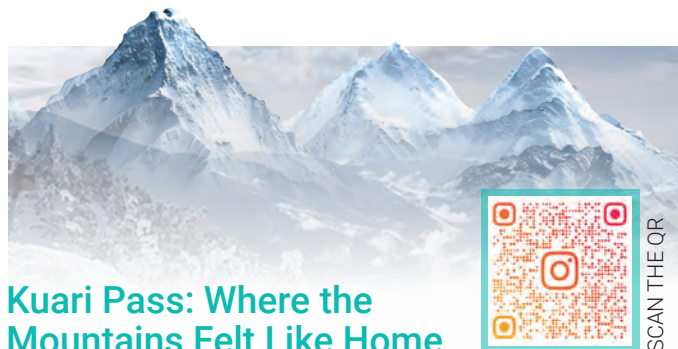
Among those imprisoned, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar endured two life sentences, surviving brutal labour and isolation while continuing to shape revolutionary thought through his writings. Sachindra Nath Sanyal reflected the British fear of revolutionary ideology itself.

The jail also confined Ganesh Damodar Savarkar, Barindra Kumar Ghosh, Ullaskar Dutt, Batukeshwar Dutt, Trailokyanath Chakraborty, and Yogendra Shukla—names etched forever into stone and memory. A cruise across endless blue brought us to Swaraj Dweep (earlier Havelock Island). Radhanagar Beach felt unreal, while Elephant Beach delivered the thrill of scuba diving into a vivid underwater world. Snorkelling, water rides, beachside food, laughter, and photo shoots stitched our days together effortlessly.

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Sandeep Kumar – RAS [GGN]



Kuari Pass: Where the Mountains Felt Like Home

For five unforgettable days, I walked alone into the vast silence of Kuari Pass, chasing snow-covered peaks and something far more personal—myself.

The journey began with the familiar thrill of leaving behind the noise of ordinary life, trading crowded roads for winding mountain trails. Each step into the Garhwal Himalayas felt like peeling away layers of distraction. The higher I climbed, the quieter the world became, until all that remained was the sound of crunching boots, cold wind, and my own thoughts. Traveling solo through Kuari Pass was not just a trek; it was a conversation between me and the mountains. It was my first real encounter with snow, and nothing could have prepared me for that moment. Two feet of fresh snow stretched endlessly across the trail like a dream made real. The white landscape transformed everything—trees, paths, distant ridges—into something magical and almost unreal. I remember standing there, surrounded by towering peaks wrapped in snow, feeling both incredibly small and deeply alive.

There was wonder in every step. My boots sank into the snow, my hands froze, and the icy wind bit at my face, but none of it mattered. For the first time, I wasn't just seeing snow—I was inside it, walking through it, becoming part of its untouched beauty.

The peaks stood around me like silent guardians, majestic and eternal. Their presence was humbling, yet strangely comforting. In those moments, I understood something I had always felt but never fully expressed: mountains make me feel more myself than any other place ever could.

Away from the rush of daily life, the mountains asked for nothing except presence. They didn't care who I was, where I came from, or what I carried beyond my backpack. In their stillness, I found clarity. In their vastness, I found freedom. Every sunrise over the snowy ridges felt like a private blessing. Every exhausting climb became a lesson in resilience. And every lonely trail somehow made me feel less alone. Kuari Pass gave me more than breathtaking views; it gave me perspective. It reminded me that sometimes, the farther we go from the world, the closer we come to ourselves. As I descended from those snow-covered heights, tired but transformed, I carried back more than memories. I carried the certainty that the mountains will always call me back—not just because they are beautiful, but because somewhere among those silent peaks, I feel most like who I truly am.

Gaurav Arora – TAX [DEL]

CELEBRATIONS GALORE

New Gurugram Office

We came together for a puja at our new Gurugram office, marking the beginning of this new space with gratitude and positive intent.

A moment to pause, reflect, and start this chapter together.



Blessed with a baby girl!

May your little angel be blessed with good health, endless joy, and a lifetime filled with love and success. May their laughter brighten every corner of your home, and may they grow surrounded

"It has been a very special and joyful time for both of us, and we're happy to share this wonderful news with all."



ASA 35th Anniversary

SC-RC organized 35th Anniversary and Annual Day celebrations across ASA offices, marking a significant milestone in the firm's journey.

Across locations, the spirit remained consistent—Bengaluru hosted a pooja, recognition ceremony, and dinner; Delhi/Gurgaon marked the occasion with cake cutting; Mumbai celebrated with a DJ night and dinner; Hyderabad, Kochi and Pune organized joyful gatherings filled with games, music, and camaraderie. Together, these celebrations reflected pride, gratitude, and a shared vision for the future, capturing the true essence of ASA at 35.



Pongal Celebration

SC-RC Chennai organized a vibrant Pongal celebration, marked by enthusiastic participation and festive engagement. Colleagues dressed in traditional attire, adding cultural richness and warmth to the workplace.

A highlight of the event was "Race to Radiance – Season 2", where teams participated in engaging games that promoted teamwork, collaboration, and friendly competition. The celebration successfully strengthened team connect and created a joyful, festive atmosphere across the office.

Memorable Annual Trip

SC-RC Kochi organized a memorable Annual Trip to Belur, Chikmagalur, and Coorg, offering a perfect blend of heritage, adventure, and relaxation. The journey began with a visit to the historic Belur Chennakeshava Temple, followed by fun-filled water activities that brought excitement and team bonding.

The next day featured an adventurous trip to Mullayanagiri Peak, including thrilling jeep trekking, followed by a serene visit to a Buddhist Monastery in Coorg. The trip concluded with local shopping and leisure time. Overall, it was a refreshing and well-curated experience, creating lasting memories of togetherness and exploration.



Gudi Padwa Celebration

SC-RC Mumbai organized a delightful Gudi Padwa celebration, combined with birthday celebrations for colleagues born between January and March.

Dressed in vibrant traditional attire, colleagues came together to celebrate new beginnings with joy and positivity. The evening was filled with warmth, cake cutting, and festive treats like Puran Poli, creating a perfect blend of culture and celebration. It was a joyful gathering that strengthened bonds and made the occasion truly special.



Cheerful Valentine's Day

SC-RC Delhi/Gurgaon organized a cheerful Valentine's Day celebration, focusing on appreciation, positivity, and the strong team spirit that defines the workplace.

The occasion was a reminder to value collaboration, kindness, and the energy each individual brings every day. Filled with smiles and warm interactions, the celebration spread joy and reinforced the bond shared among colleagues.



Kick-Off Games

SC-RC Kochi organized a series of engaging Weekend Kick-Off Games during Friday evenings throughout the month, promoting relaxation, interaction, and work-life balance through short and interactive formats.

The activities included Game 18 – Bingo, Game 19 – Crossword Puzzle, and Game 20 – Identify the Object, each designed to spark participation, creativity, and quick thinking. These sessions brought colleagues together for light-hearted fun, making Fridays more enjoyable and refreshing across the workplace.



Board Games Evening

SC-RC Delhi organized a lively Board Games Evening. Transforming the office into a mini game zone filled with laughter and friendly competition.

Colleagues stepped away from their screens to enjoy a variety of games, showcasing strategy, teamwork, and playful spirit. With refreshments adding to the energy, the evening provided a perfect opportunity to unwind, connect, and create fun-filled memories together.

ASA Premier League

SC-RC Bangalore organized an action-packed ASA Premier League multi-sport weekend, featuring Football (Boys), Volleyball (Boys), and Throwball (Girls) across two exciting days in January 2026.

The matches were filled with high energy, competitive spirit, and strong teamwork, as players gave their best on the field while colleagues cheered from the sidelines. With vibrant team jerseys, enthusiastic participation, and electrifying moments throughout, the event truly celebrated camaraderie, sportsmanship, and the spirit of APL.

Badminton Competition

SC-RC Bangalore organized an exciting Badminton Competition as part of the ASA Premier League, at Badminton Park. The event witnessed high-energy matches, fast-paced rallies, and enthusiastic participation from players.

Equipped with their game-day gear and sporting spirit, participants showcased skill, agility, and teamwork throughout the tournament. The lively atmosphere, filled with cheers and competitive energy, made it a perfect blend of sport, excitement, and team bonding under the APL banner.



Live Cricket Streaming

SC-RC Mumbai organized an exciting Cricket Live Streaming session, bringing colleagues together to enjoy the thrill of the game in a lively office setting.

With cheers, discussions, and shared excitement over every boundary and wicket, the atmosphere was filled with energy and camaraderie. The event turned a regular match into a collective celebration, strengthening team bonds through the shared love for cricket.



Lohri Celebration

SC-RC Delhi/Gurgaon organized a vibrant Lohri celebration on 13th January 2026, bringing colleagues together for an evening filled with warmth and festive spirit.

The celebration featured a traditional bonfire, lively dhol beats, and delicious snacks, creating an atmosphere of joy and togetherness. With enthusiastic participation and high energy, the event truly captured the essence of Lohri, leaving everyone with cheerful memories and festive vibes.



Evening Full of Fun

SC-RC Delhi/Gurgaon organized a lively ASA Party, bringing colleagues together for an evening full of fun, laughter, and celebration.

The event was filled with vibrant energy, joyful interactions, and memorable moments that everyone cherished. From candid snapshots to shared laughter, the celebration created lasting memories and strengthened team bonds. It was truly a night to remember!



Creative Cooking

SC-RC Bangalore organized a creative Cooking Without Fire activity as part of the Republic Day celebrations. Colleagues came together in tricolour attire, forming teams to prepare innovative dishes inspired by Indian flavours—without using fire.

The event highlighted creativity, presentation, and teamwork, as participants showcased colourful and delicious preparations. The evening concluded with snacks and cheerful interactions, making it a fun, engaging, and truly memorable way to celebrate the spirit of Republic Day.



If your career were a conspiracy theory, what would people say about you?

They'd say I'm not building a career - I'm running a cross-sector conspiracy powered by strategy, chaos, witchcraft, and a bit of alien tech.

If you could delete one corporate buzzword from existence, which one would you eliminate forever?

I'd eliminate 'As per my last email'—the corporate version of 'I already told you, please keep up..'

What's the most dramatic thought you've had during a busy workday?

Somewhere between voodoo, witchcraft, and 'there must be a more peaceful way to handle this'

What's the most useless skill you've mastered—and somehow still use at work?

On a serious note: seeing things from multiple perspectives. On a lighter note.. "Ye nahi toh aur sahi."

If your job came with a warning label, what would it say?

Warning: High stress zone—expect chaos, zero work-life balance, and a daily subscription to existential crisis

If you had to explain your work to a 5-year-old using only emojis, what would it look like?

☑️📁💡💰 - Basically turning ideas into money... and chaos into billable revenue

If you could replace meetings with something else, what would it be?

I wouldn't replace meetings—I'd replace pointless ones with focused conversations and keep at least two days a week gloriously meeting-free.

If your personality were an Excel function, which one would it be?

Definitely an error message—because life....

If your boss gave you a day off with no questions asked, what's the first thing you'd do?

Disappear into a pile of unread books like it's a luxury I've been postponing for years.

What's one thing you pretend to understand at work but secretly Google later?

Nothing—I Google everything, because in my job 'I'll find out' is the real expertise

Rapid Fire

- **Work chaos or personal chaos—which one are you better at handling?**
Personal chaos—work chaos just makes me want to commit murder.
- **Multitasking genius or selective ignorance expert?**
I aspire to be a selective ignorance expert—still learning to say "No"
- **Coffee overdose or sleep deprivation?**
Sleep deprivation—because the coffee isn't worth overdosing on ☕
- **100 unread emails or one scary client call?**
One scary client call—emails are the real horror story
- **Spreadsheet crash or Wi-Fi crash?**
Wi-Fi crash—spreadsheet crashes will result in violence, murder and lots of torture.
- **Speak your mind or keep the peace?**
Speak your mind—peace survives with honesty and acceptance. Not silence
- **Always early or fashionably late?**
Always early... with a strategic early exit plan
- **One superpower at work—mind reading or time freezing?**
Time freezing—because 24 hours isn't enough
- **Fix the problem or fix the perception?**
Fix the problem—perception has a mind of its own.
- **Deadline today or deadline yesterday?**
Yesterday—at this point, I just enjoy watching them fly past 🚀

In conversation with
Kim Collaco
Partner
Enterprise Strategy [MUM]



Manoj Sharma
Associate Director, BAS (AHD)

A sharp-minded thinker, with experience as guide,
From people to projects, he masters with pride.

With clients he connects, no matter the hour,
Through late nights and calls, with calmness and power.

A heart tuned to Japan, in language and art,
Yet rooted in India, close to his heart.

With yoga and stars, his spirit stays true,
Blending logic and faith in all that he'll do.

In Ahmedabad's circles, respected and wise,
With warmth in his words and
vision in his eyes.



Manasa Srivathsa Rao
Associate Director, ABS, (BLR)

With vision so clear and purpose so strong,
She leads with wisdom, steady and long.

Time bends to her will, people align,
With ease she manages—gracefully fine.

Fearless in spirit, yet gentle in tone,
She builds trust and strength all on her own.

Firm yet empathetic, calm yet bold,
A leader whose presence is truly gold.



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