

The President of India lauds ICT initiatives of Civil Accounts Organization



Shri Jawahar Thakur, Controller General of Accounts presenting the memento to the Hon'ble President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee

officers of Civil Accounts Organization.

Addressing the probationers, the President said that the Indian Civil Accounts Service was carved out of the Indian Audit and Accounts Service in 1976 as part of reforms in India's Public Financial Management System. The idea was to separate statutory audit and accounts at the federal level. The President stated that he was happy to note that the system has worked well. The Civil Accounts Organization has, over the years, progressed in the right direction and has developed systems not only to keep pace with developments in Information and Communication Technology but also to fulfill the aspirations of the common people.

The President said that Indian Civil Accounts Service has very rightly chosen its motto 'Koshpoorvah Samarambhah' from Kautilya's 'Arthashastra'. A strong and well-managed treasury function is the base for all kind of planning in governance and development; and also the outcome of good governance. Today there is a rising expectation among the public for greater efficiency in delivery systems. To address these concerns

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Hon'ble President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee addressing the ICAS officers

it is imperative for government departments to modernize their systems and make them citizen-centric. He said that he was happy that the reforms introduced by the organization were in the correct direction.

The President stated that use of modern ICT tools is the key for all government agencies to achieve higher efficiency and make optimum use of available human resources. The Civil Accounts Organization was one of the first organizations in India to have started using computers in government business initially. He

said that he had an opportunity to inaugurate the 'Government e-Payment Gateway' (GEPG), developed by the Civil Accounts Organization on October 31, 2011 in his capacity as the Finance Minister. The idea behind developing an e-payment system was to eliminate beneficiary-dependence on government offices and officials; and instead directly credit funds into their accounts. With e-payment initiative the Payment Life Cycle has shrunk, thereby improving systemic efficiency.

from the editorial ROOM

Year 2014 started with great news to cherish. The Government of India approved the National Roll-out of CPSMS as a Central Sector Scheme and renamed it as the Public Financial Management System (PFMS). This is a big responsibility for Civil Accounts Organization. Apart from a report on this, we are carrying another interesting story on e-scholarship. This explains how PFMS is helping government at every level in implementing the plan schemes.

Recently ICAS probationers got an opportunity to call on the President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee. Apart from the cover story on this, one of the probationers M. Renuka has shared her experience of visiting Rashtrapati Bhawan. Long awaited fifth Assembly of Association of Government Accounts Organizations of Asia (AGAOA) was held in Thimpu. Member countries agreed to have more activities under the banner of AGAOA. India has to play a major role in the capacity building for the officials of member countries. We have a detailed report on this at the back cover.

Civil Accounts Organization in its relentless pursuit to share knowledge with other

countries organized many international programmes in this financial year. We have one report on ITEC-SCAAP programme that recently concluded. This has been contributed by one of the participants from Kyrgyzstan. INGAF is training 100 Afghan officials in four batches on Internal Audit and PFM in 2013-14. We have a report on the training of third batch of Afghan officials.

ICAS probationers of 2012 batch, as part of their Bharat Darshan, went to Andaman Nicobar Islands. Revathy D. has done a report for our popular Post Card page. Dr. N. Shravan Kumar has filed an interesting story on his village attachment in Haryana.

We have a new contributor for our newsletter in this issue. Sreedevi V Nair has shared her experience of training on Internal Audit, she underwent recently. We look forward to have new contributors in every issue of Civil Accounts Newsletter.



e-Scholarship through PFMS

“If this integration was done a couple of years back, I would not be a victim of bureaucratic hassles in payment of my scholarship amount. I have so far received scholarship for years 2009-10 and 2010-11 only. For another two years 2011-12 and 2012-13, I am still in queue even after completing all the formalities. The balance amount is Rs. one lakh sixty thousand. Only after getting it, my father would be able to pay back the loan amount.”

scholarships through cheques and cash certainly appears like a medieval period maritime ship having no time line once the direction is lost. Tracing out its reason for delay is practically terrible for a student.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is believed to be a powerful tool and catalyst for accelerating economic development of a society. It has considerable potential for delivering public services.



Ahshan Ahmad, Student of NIFT, Delhi is not the only victim but there is plethora of such episodes in the non-transparent age old system of disbursement of funds to beneficiaries under various schemes of Scholarships.

The age old system of disbursement of

Under e-initiative, various MIS systems of concerned Ministries, Departments and other Government Agencies maintain online database of students which is available in public domain. Anyone can view the beneficiary list online on respective Web portals. However these MIS

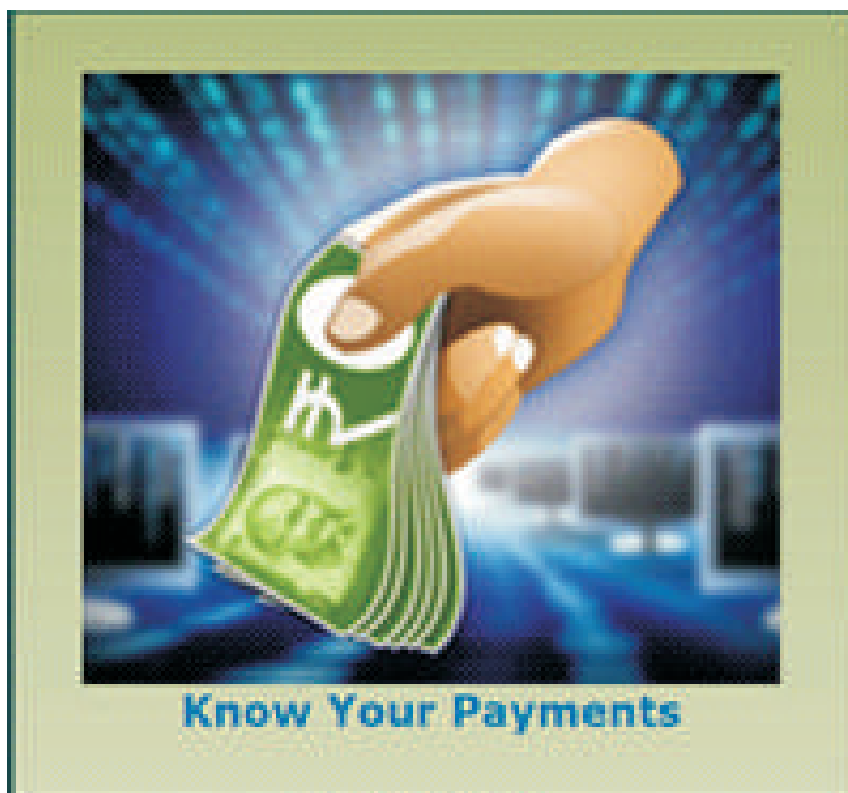
Systems have no mechanism to identify the ghost beneficiaries as the identification of students for scholarship remains with the institutes. Further, there is no mechanism to identify whether the same beneficiary is paid or the point of time when one is paid.

Integration of Online Scholarship Management Systems with Public Financial Management System (PFMS) would be a milestone in establishing a system for transparency and accountability in managing the scholarships paid to thousands of students all across India from the metros to the most remote villages. PFMS will provide

online real-time MIS for bank accounts credited against the students list. This will provide the audit trail to the Administrative Ministries as well as the State Agencies and other MIS Users of different hierarchy on one click. Verification of details for grievances could be done online. There would be no need to verify passbooks and seize the registers. One can verify whether the same amount is been credited to the beneficiary account one was eligible for and also the timeliness of payment as per Guidelines. Further, the system eliminates the manual intervention once the beneficiary list is final.

For Central Government Scholarships, e_Sanction and e_Bill would be generated by Program Division and payment will be made by PAO of the Ministry through Government e_Payment Gateway (GePG). For scholarships, the previous process of disbursement involved

the money travelling through up to six administrative layers. Now, it would be reduced to a two-step process by process of re-engineering thereby shrinking the period of disbursement cycle. It is also a step towards green and clean environment as it will



discontinue the need of issuing millions of cheques every year.

Added to this, PFMS provides online payment status to the beneficiaries by merely entering the Aadhar number or bank account number on the link 'Know your payments' on home page of PFMS web portal.

- Vivekanand

Government approves National Roll-out of Public Financial Management System (PFMS)



Based on the successful implementation of the Central Plan Scheme Monitoring System (CPSMS) in a few states such as Bihar, MP, Mizoram, Punjab, Kerala and Odisha, etc. the national rollout has recently been approved by the Cabinet with a total outlay of Rs. 1080 crore over the 12th Plan period (i.e. up to 2016-17). Now CPSMS will be known as Public Financial Management System (PFMS).

The rollout of Public Financial Management System will result in better cash management for the Government, greater transparency and accountability in public expenditure.

The project organization structure will comprise the Project Implementation Committee (PIC) at the apex level, a Central Project Management Unit (CPMU), State Project Management Unit (SPMU) initially in 19 states and District Project Management Unit (DPMU) in each district to facilitate the pan India rollout. For this national roll out of PFMS 1 post of HAG level and 22 posts of SAG level have been created. 19 posts will be operated at State PMU level and rest 4 will be operated at Central PMU. In addition, posts required below SAG level, including the technical posts as per the approved structure, viz. CPMU, SPMU and as

approved by the Ministry of Finance will also be created soon.

Public Financial Management System (PFMS), earlier known as CPSMS, is a Central Sector plan scheme being implemented by the Controller General of Accounts. PFMS is a comprehensive on-line Financial Management Information System (FMIS) which provides for a financial management platform for all plan schemes, database for all recipient agencies and integration with Core Banking Solution of all banks handling plan funds to enable efficient and effective tracking of fund flow to the lowest level of implementation of the plan schemes.

As a 'Network of networks', PFMS is also designed to interface with all state treasury systems to provide information across all plan schemes/ implementing agencies on resource availability and utilization, leading to better monitoring, review and real time decision support in programme implementation. All Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) payments under various schemes of the Government are being made through this system and online payment information made available to ultimate beneficiaries.

Auditing can be interesting



Life was going smooth, I was relaxed and enjoying my routine life. One fine day I was informed that I had to undergo training for five weeks at INGAF, RTC Mumbai. The subjectINTERNAL AUDIT!!!

A group of 20 participants were going to the first batch of trainees from INGAF, RTC Mumbai and I was one of them. Five weeks of lectures on Audit seemed too long and boring (where I was sure of sleeping through the lectures). But I was in for a surprise!

On the first day each of us were given a heavy kit with lots of books, pen, pencils, which gave an indication of "This is serious Studying and you have to be alert". Here I was not an AAO but a student going to my new school, to learn the basic of Internal Auditing. (With bag and books).

Various topics relating to Internal Audit i.e. Standards of Internal Audit, Audit Planning, Use of IT in internal Audit, Combating Frauds etc. were covered during these five weeks. Faculties and guest lecturers, who were very distinguished and scholarly in their respective fields, introduced these topics to us. They left no stones unturned in trying to make us understand the concepts of internal audit, which were new to us. The word "Auditing" no longer seemed boring! I

had no idea that Information Technology could be used to combat fraud! It was interesting to learn about the various prima facie evidences that could be collected to detect IT Fraud. The use of IDEA Technique also gave a new insight into the developments that government was making to improve the standard of our organizations.

The final week saw three groups, that we were divided in, going to different offices for conducting "Real Internal Audit" . This was the best and the most tiresome part of the

audit, as we were used to being the Auditees and not the Auditors! Various vouchers and registers had to be checked, objections raised had to be justified with supporting documents and related rules. We had to analyze the vouchers from risk point of view also. Though this was a part of training, the audit being conducted had to be real...!

Finally , Audit report had to be submitted , which was in itself a joy to make because the report was a fruit of our own efforts and also it truly justified the hard work done by our faculties in teaching us to do the 'right thing at the right time'. The cream on the cake was when one of my team members was declared first among the 20 participants.

This training has made me realize that the internal control systems that we learned could be used in our own organization, every day and in our own way. We can assess our organizations work and try to take corrective actions. The main objective of the training would be achieved only by putting in practice the techniques learned during the training.

- Sreedevi V. Nair

Experiencing India while Learning PFM

As a part of Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) program my candidature was selected for a three-week duration course on Public Financial Management (PFM) which consists of Accounts, Budget, Audit, Banking and Finance. The Program was organized by Institute of Government Accounts and Finance (INGAF) New Delhi and sponsored by Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.

The Controller General of Accounts, Government of India, inaugurated the program. It was a nicely organized joint inaugural ceremony for three Public Financial Management Courses simultaneously for ITEC program, PFM for Officers of Afghanistan Government and PFM for Officers from FCGO, Government of Nepal. The Inauguration began with welcome address by Director INGAF followed by lightening of lamp, which is an auspicious custom in Indian tradition.



Shri Deepak Das, Director, INGAF presenting the Certificate of Participation to a participant from Montserrat Island

33 participants from 24 countries located in different continents participated in the training program. The program provided us a unique platform to interact with people from different cultures speaking different languages and having different geographical backgrounds.

The curriculum of the program included class room sessions and visits to various places of political and historical interests, art and culture galleries giving exposure to Indian Heritage.

The contents of the entire lecture hall sessions were very specifically designed to give an overview of various aspect of Public Financial Management System prevalent in India. Apart from the classroom sessions, INGAF also organized local study tours to have firsthand experience on functioning of various Government /Semi - Government organizations viz. State Bank of India and Delhi

Metro etc.

To facilitate in depth exposure on functioning of Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), the Institute organized a two days long visit to some villages in the close vicinity of Alwar. Alwar is one of the heritage cities of Rajasthan – an Indian

State. The villages are self reliant with the help of NGOs .

The participants were apprised of various initiatives taken by NGOs with the help of locals to bring self reliance , development and



Eliza Bortoeva from Kyrgyzstan participated in third ITEC-SCAAP Programme of 2013-14 on 'Public Financial Management', organized by INGAF, New Delhi. She filed this report after the completion of the programme.

where the participants visited 'The Taj' The monument is a symbol of Love & Peace and is one of the most visited places in India . Visit to other places of historical interests at Agra , including Agra Fort ,were also organized on the same day . It was a memorable visit for all the participants depicting unique picture of Indian art & culture .

Back in Delhi ,INGAF organized visits to various places of Religious , Political and Historical interests viz .Qutab Minar ,Gandhi Simriti ,Dilli Haat to bring out historical and cultural heritage of capital city of India .

The program concluded on 28th February ,2014 with a Valedictory Session in Takshashila Hall at INGAF . Apart from distribution of Certificates , souvenirs and digitalized course material were given to all the participants .

I convey my thanks to INGAF and ITEC Division of Ministry of External Affairs ,Government of India for organizing such an informative program which not only familiarized the participants with various aspects of Public Financial Management system but also gave an exposure to great Heritages ,Religions ,Arts and Culture of India . India ,the largest democracy in today's world is a model of 'Unity in Diversity' . Experiencing India has really been an unforgettable experience in our lives for times to come . I again thanks for taking care of us in all possible ways and to make our stay comfortable .

- Eliza Bortoeva

prosperity . It was a unique and enjoyable experience for all the participants .

The Institute organized a day long trip to Agra

Shaking hands through capacity building

Taking the baton of success from two previous training programs for the officers from IDLG, Afghanistan, the third in the series of four programs was inaugurated on 5th March, 2014. This programme on Public Financial Management was sponsored by Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.

Afghanistan, an ancient focal point of the Silk Road and human migration is on roll to learn the intricacies of public financial management and the purpose of this association is to enhance ken with a view to achieve and imbibe the success stories of Indian PFM system and the related better practices being followed in the global scenario.

As expectations were already high, the two weeks program touched its acme on the first day itself, with the end of inaugural lecturers comment, that “this is by far the best batch and different from previous ones, as they are focused, keen learners and participative” and not only that, the entire gamut of guest faculties had a word of praise for them.

The sessions ranging from PFM, Accounting Structure, Public Private Partnership, Pension Payment system, revenue management and contemporary trends in Internal Audit were well appreciated by the participants. It was not only rigorous classroom sessions but awesome

replica on earth of the house of Mumtaz in paradise; the Taj Mahal was also in the agenda of every participant. The program ended with valedictory session on change management which was another highlight of the program and top of it, the level of enthusiasm of the participants during the valedictory ceremony was quite amazing, as they were more than willing to grab the certificates and souvenirs of their colleagues.



Smt. Sujata Prasad, JS&FA, Ministry of Coal presenting Certificate of Participation to one of the participants from Afghanistan

Ms. Sujata Prasad, the former Director of INGAF in her valedictory address to the participants said that the camaraderie would do wonders for the two neighbours in the field of Public Financial Management.

Finally, one of the participants touched our heart by saying “that the people of Afghanistan will neither forget the friendship extended by India nor they will take a single step backward when it comes to standing by the side of India”.

- Jagmohan Parsoya

Learning at Grassroots

Villages are the life line for the country. They abuzz with activities. On one side they spin the wheel of development through agriculture, horticulture, sericulture, diary, poultry, handicrafts, handlooms and so on. On the other side they are the backbone in continuation and promotion of culture, art, architecture, sculpture, music, folklore, literature, traditions, customs and harmony in community life.

Amidst this contribution and splendour, villages are bogged with issues of disparity and inequity on lines of gender, caste, religion, education, health, employment and well being. These differences have their reflection on socio-economic, political and cultural spheres upon activities in the village. Gandhiji believed overcoming of these disparities as a silver line for realization of goal of Swaraj.

Since independence policymakers through various schemes and programmes have put onus on promotion of opportunities for education and employment, provision of facilities for health, sanitation and drinking water, construction of houses, eradication of poverty and abolition of evil practices of untouchability female infanticide, discrimination and disharmony in the society from village level for development in the country. For achieving this, measures for strengthening of Panchayati Raj institutions are being initiated from time to time.

An understanding and appraisal of these is key for each of the functionary from bottom to helm in the

bureaucracy in the country. The foundation course for young officers through a visit to rural areas gives an ample opportunity to know about the prospects and problems in the villages. My visit to Khanpur-Khurd village of Jhajjar District in Haryana as part of my Foundation Course is a memorable experience. It is of a two-way learning process through exchange of opinions and experiences with villagers.

The responses elicited by people in village showcases steady transformation from a hamlet to present stage with 95% having concrete houses, cent percent cement roads, sanitation, drinking water, health centres, *anganwadis*, primary to higher secondary school and so on. The village panchayat is headed by a woman. The women and under privileged communities are having a say in the functioning of panchayat in the village.

The awareness of public on issues of rights of women, child and as electorate is resulting in bringing a change through improvement in sex ratio, education of girl child, assertiveness in raising their demands for Parks, Roads, Libraries, Electricity, Water and so on in Gram-Sabha meetings. The public are also aware of ongoing DBT Scheme. They are enthusiastic and raised many queries about the scheme. Upon our answers for their questions they expressed their urge for implementation of this scheme in their village too. This way the learning process at grassroots is amazing and marvelous.

- Dr. N. Shravan Kumar



PAO, Bhopal Gas Victims

Know our PAO

Tragedy was the backdrop in which the Pay and Accounts office, Bhopal Gas Victims was established 8 years after the disaster struck the city of lakes on the intervening night of 2nd and 3rd December 1984. Situated opposite to the Old Vidhan Shabha this is one of the small Pay and Accounts offices destined to support the accounting function of the disbursement of compensation to the 5.74 lacs of victims.

In 2010, this office was entrusted with the additional responsibility of disbursing the Ex-Gratia payment to the victims of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy. The tiny office with all the support from its Principal Accounts office raised to the occasion to grab the opportunity of proving the capability of the Civil Accounts Organization in taking proactive role in citizen centric initiative. While developing IT based system “Rahat

Lekha” it did not forget to take along all the stakeholders including the Judiciary. Apart from a Pay and Accounts officer, two Assistant Accounts Officers, three Accountants and one MTS, there are one data administrator and a few data entry operators whose undaunted will to work hard has helped to complete almost 95% of the task within a very short span of time.

Pay & Accounts office, Bhopal Gas Victims, as the name itself suggests, was a melancholy, until it was awarded the CGA's Best Practice award in 2011 for its innovative approach in disaster management.

While the Tribunal module of the “Rahat Lekha” captures the data and generate sanction letters for the Judiciary in the Tribunals, the PAO module of the software does the Pre-check and generates bank advices. The office has won the heart of the victims with this significant work.



A day to cherish



replica of the crown... history slowly started unraveling in front of us.

Further extending this wonderful memory to be, we entered the famous Mughal Gardens. This Persian style of garden is situated at the back of the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

After the brief visit to the garden we were taken to the Yellow Drawing Room (YDR), eagerly awaiting the president's arrival. Sharp at 12.30 pm entered the Honourable President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee. Floral welcome was given by Shri Jawahar Thakur and Shri Deepak Das. With an informative welcome speech by Shri Jawahar Thakur, began our actual day with the President of India.

It was indeed a unique opportunity for both Mr. Harsha (ICAS 2012 Probationer) and myself when we shared our training experiences before the Honourable President of India. Heart pumping at its fastest rate, the adrenaline rush, a feeble voice at the back of my head asking not to forget any line and to top it off, an audience including the first citizen of our country, was one grand combination that will linger till the end of my life.

The official photograph with The President of India finally marked the end to our visit to Rashtrapati Bhavan. At around 1.30 p.m we left the Rashtrapati Bhavan with head held high for clearing the prestigious civil services examination. The hard work, struggle, effort was definitely worth it....

- M. Renuka

March 14, 2014 – a day to cherish in all our lives for years to come. We had the opportunity to visit The Rashtrapati Bhavan for the first time.

Dressed in uniform beautiful green sarees and majestic bandhgalas, we assembled ourselves before the Rashtrapati Bhavan at 10.30 am. After the routine security check we were escorted to the actual multidimensional splendor that is the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

We were informed by Ms. Rosy Gupta, a voluntary guide at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, that this palace has got four floors and three forty rooms. We were taken to the Durbar Hall which was once known as the throne room during British rule. The Marble Hall, the piano key type table, use of Indian bells in the pillars, the flora patterns, the dome, the architecture as a whole made us all wonder how would a life as an occupant of the Rashtrapati Bhavan be like.

We also had a chance to have a glimpse of

Post Card

Having heard so many stories, I was looking forward for our visit to Andaman and Nicobar Islands. A glimpse of its beauty from the flight kindled the curiosity further and I couldn't wait to explore. For an instant the thought crossed my mind "OMG! Will I be out of civilization?" I was proved wrong. "Ping". Message on WhatsApp. The infrastructure and development of the island capital impressed me and would match with those of metropolitan cities.

Within hours of landing at Veer Savarkar Airport, we were at Corbyn's Cove Beach enjoying the nature. Completely exhausted, we returned back to the Circuit House. Having recharged our batteries for the day, we set out to Wandoor beach. The transparent blue water at Wandoor is a treat for the eyes. Enthralled by its beauty, we hardly noticed the time and played in waters till all our energy was drained out. We had to drag few of our friends out of water because we didn't want to miss the Son-et-Lumiere (Sound and Light Show) at the Cellular Jail. The Cellular Jail, now a National Memorial, takes our memories back to those of freedom struggle and sacrifices made by our forefathers. With many places left out at Port Blair, we started our trip to North Andaman.

We had studied about the vast forest resources of Andaman in books. Experiencing it live was breath-taking. The lavish green sceneries were refreshing the heart and soul. The mysterious creations of the nature kept me wondering and reminded me 'The Road Not Taken' by Robert Frost. We passed through Jarawa tribes reserved area, crossed two straits, travelled a long distance to Diglipur. But the scenic beauty of Ramnagar Beach and Karmatong beach was worth the journey. Turtle nesting at these beaches has been taken care by the Forest department meticulously and we got handful of information about the varieties and lifecycle of turtles. One



Enchanted in Andmans!!!



night stay at Mayabunder infused fresh energy into all of us. The Dingi ride to Parrot Island was a memorable one (little scary too). The sight of the birds, cool breeze, and water splashing on faces was a different experience. We didn't forget to click snaps in that scared moments too. On our return to Port Blair, we stopped over at Dhani Nallah Mangrove walk way. It's an initiative to promote eco-tourism by the forest department and directorate of tourism. We came to know about other such eco-tourism activities and conservation projects taken up the government in North and Middle Andaman.

We visited the Anthropological Survey of India, the oldest Saw Mill setup by the British, Chidiyatapu and Mount Harriet National Park. These places had their own importance and the view from Mt. Harriet was magnificent. We had a special photo session at the location, which is depicted on the backside of 20 rupee note. The visit to Ross Island needs a special mention. The island stands up against the damages caused by the Tsunami. The buildings and monuments built during British time are still standing against the odds of nature. One of the best locations for photography and for lovers of history and civil engineering.

The next day was the most awaited day – To Havelock Island. This island is the main tourist attraction spot and one could easily identify the reason. The Radhanagar beach with shallow and clean water thrilled us. It brought out the childish nature in all of us and few of us were trying to show their skills on sand art!! The location of Dolphin resort in itself was amazing and the dinner at Anju Coco would be cherished forever. Trip without shopping? We can't imagine. We were shopping freaks on the last day of our trip and yes it included gifts for family and friends too.

- Revathy D.

5th Assembly ends at high note in Thimpu



The 5th Assembly of AGAOA (Association of Government Accounts Organisations of Asia) was organised in Thimpu, Bhutan on 19th and 20th December of 2013.

The theme of this assembly was "Strengthening Public Financial Management through use of ICT". The 5th Assembly of AGAOA was represented by Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal.

The chair of AGAOA transferred from Bangladesh to Bhutan. Mr. Choiten Wangchuk, Director General, Department of Public Accounts, Bhutan is new chairperson of AGAOA.

The Assembly was inaugurated by Mr. Namgay Dorji, the Finance Minister of Bhutan. In his keynote address Mr. Dorji advised to use AGAOA platform to have tie ups with centers of excellence worldwide in the field of public financial management, accounting and auditing. He also outlined the challenges accounting organizations are facing worldwide. He informed the house about the commitment of Government of

Bhutan for good governance which is one of the four pillars of Gross National Happiness Index of Bhutan.

All participating countries agreed on regular interaction among member countries and also on designing and delivering capacity development programs for the professionals of accounts organizations using the platform of AGAOA. It was also decided to plan the future assemblies in such a way that all member countries get adequate time and they participate to make the AGAOA platform more effective, meaningful and responsible.

Shri Jawahar Thakur, CGA India suggested that member countries of AGAOA should explore the possibilities of exchanging officers for better understanding and appreciation of the Public Financial Management Systems in other countries. He also emphasized to extend the membership of AGAOA to other Asian and even non-Asian countries. He said that INGAF will keep offering the special training slots to AGAOA member countries.

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