



## From the President

Dear Members

The Chamber of Tax Consultants and ILS Law College, Pune, proudly hosted the first-ever National Chamber of Tax Consultants Indirect Tax Moot Court Competition in 2024, marking a pioneering achievement in legal education focused on GST. This groundbreaking event, culminating in success on March 30, 2024, at the ILS Law College Auditorium, was distinguished by the participation of Hon'ble Justices Prithviraj Chavan and Neela Kedar Gokhale from the Bombay High Court, whose insights profoundly enriched the experience for all attendees. The presence of Chief Guest, the Additional Director General - DGGI Pune Shri Devendra Nagvenkar added depth to the discourse, highlighting the real-world enforcement of GST laws. The event not only set a benchmark for legal moot competitions but also emphasized the collaborative strength of The Chamber of Tax Consultants and ILS Law College in fostering a practical legal education environment. Special appreciation goes to the student chairperson and the dedicated teams from both the Chamber and ILS Law College, whose collective vision and hard work brought this unprecedented event to life. This successful initiation sets a new precedent for legal competitions, highlighting our commitment to excellence and innovation in legal education. We look forward to continuing this legacy, inspired by the brilliance and dedication demonstrated at the 1st National Chamber of Tax Consultants Indirect Tax Moot Court Competition, 2024.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) recently issued a circular that maintains the monetary thresholds for the Income-tax Department's appeal filings with the ITAT, High Courts, and Supreme Court, while significantly expanding the list of exceptions. This expansion covers a broad spectrum of scenarios, including penny stocks, TDS/TCS disputes, and the interpretation of tax treaties, aiming to protect revenue and ensure compliance. However, this broadening raises concerns about potential complexities and the risk of ensnaring genuine taxpayers in litigation over 'insignificant' amounts. The concern is not just the financial burden on taxpayers but also the broader impact on investor sentiment and international business relations, particularly in light of disputes that may arise from interpretations of international tax treaties. The approach, while intended to curb tax evasion, may inadvertently signal a shift towards a more litigious tax environment. This

could have implications for cross-border trade and investment, underscoring the need for a careful evaluation of these changes by professionals and stakeholders within our community.

Sustainability becomes a key part of business, our job as tax professionals is changing. We're now at the forefront of helping businesses combine their financial goals with environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards. This includes making sure companies meet ESG requirements, use tax benefits for eco-friendly investments, and understand the tax side of sustainable business moves. Our work goes beyond usual auditing to include ESG risk checks and making sure ESG efforts show correctly in financial reports. With new government tax incentives for green projects, there's a big chance for us to guide our clients and support the environment at the same time. I understand that, there are hurdles like varying ESG standards and complex data needs, but these are also chances for us to lead and innovate. Staying updated on ESG knowledge and working with ESG experts will keep us ahead in this important area.

Women now make up 48% of new Chartered Accountants, a huge leap from just 8% in 2000. This incredible progress shows India's commitment to gender equality, especially in finance and accountancy. Women aren't just joining in larger numbers; they're excelling, often topping the CA exams result exhibit in 2020 and 2021. The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) supports this growth by updating its courses to be more inclusive, aligning with the National Education Policy 2020. ICAI President Ranjeet Kumar Agarwal sees this as a big win for diversity in finance, matching the Modi government's push for gender parity and inclusive growth. As this trend continues, it's clear that embracing diversity not only enriches our professional community but also strengthens our financial sector. Let's keep supporting everyone who wants to pursue this career, making our financial world diverse and dynamic.

The low number of young people, especially 18 and 19-year-olds, signing up to vote is worrying. It shows they feel disconnected from politics, which is bad for democracy. Democracy works best when everyone takes part, and missing young voices means we're missing out on representing everyone's views. To fix this, we need to make voting easier for young people who move around a lot and teach them about politics in a way that connects with their lives. Political groups should also make a real effort to listen to what young people want and include their views in discussions. Getting young people interested and involved in voting is key to keeping our democracy strong and inclusive.

The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)'s recent data reveals a slowdown in the growth of its subscriber base to 16.3% last financial year, with a total exceeding 7.3 crore across government, private sector, and Atal Pension Yojana. The introduction of a new tax regime, offering lower rates without investment exemptions, is seen as a key factor impacting the National Pension System (NPS), especially within the private sector which now represents a 7.5% share. The corporate scheme growth

moderated to 16.1%, marking the slowest pace since the economic impact of Covid-19 in 2020-21, while the all-citizens model experienced a deceleration to 20.3% growth in FY24. This moderation is attributed to the new tax regime's lack of exemption for employee contributions, contrasting with preserved benefits for employer contributions to NPS, and the prevailing default choice of PF and Employees' Pension Scheme. The situation is compounded by a lack of awareness among new employees about their pension options. Despite these challenges, NPS assets under management witnessed over 30% growth, reaching 11.7 lakh crore by March-end 2024, with government employees comprising the majority share. This scenario underscores the need for enhanced awareness and potential policy adjustments to foster a more robust pension system landscape.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has reported a notable increase in net direct tax collections by 19.88%, reaching over ₹ 18.90 lakh crore as of March 17, 2024. This includes Corporation Tax and Personal Income Tax along with Securities Transaction Tax, indicating a strong economic performance and tax administration efficiency. With refunds totalling ₹ 3.37 lakh crore, the commitment to prompt and fair tax processing is evident. The gross collections before refunds stood at ₹ 22.27 lakh crore, marking an 18.74% growth year-on-year. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's upward revision of the projection to ₹ 19.45 lakh crore for FY24 reflects a positive outlook on fiscal health, emphasizing the critical role of tax compliance and advisory services.

In the last month, The Chamber of Tax Consultants has spearheaded a series of enriching programs across diverse domains of professional interest. Notably, CA Naysar Parekh's webinar on NFRA orders/QRB reports unveiled intricate details of regulatory frameworks and best audit practices. The realm of Direct Taxes saw Mr. Chirag Wadhwa enlightening us on key decisions, while a seminar on 15th March, co-hosted with IMC & BCAS, delved into the restructuring of family-owned businesses with luminaries like CA Amrish Shah, CA Anup Shah, and others offering their profound insights. In International Taxation, CA Maneet Singh Sabharwal and CA Pankaj Bhuta alongside CA Naisar Shah provided deep dives into US Taxation and FEMA compounding, respectively, equipping members with essential knowledge for navigating global compliance challenges. Furthermore, our collaboration with the Tax Bar Association, Amravati, and Vidarbha Tax Practitioners' Association for a Direct Taxes seminar reinforced our commitment to enhancing professional acumen across the community. Student engagement was particularly vibrant, with the "Webinar Series on CA Student Orientation Course" covering a wide spectrum of topics from tax filings to GST compliance, illustrating our commitment to the professional growth of our future members. Lastly, the Study Circle & Study Group's sessions, including "Recent Judgements under Income Tax Act" and "New Reassessment Regime & Latest Updates," ensured our members stayed abreast of critical legal advancements, highlighting our unwavering dedication to fostering a knowledgeable and informed professional community.

Join us for an insightful panel discussion, "Navigating FEMA's Practical Challenges," organized by the International Taxation Committee of The Chamber of Tax Consultants (CTC). This event is set for April month, focusing on the real-world challenges professionals encounter under FEMA. Our respected panellists, CA Paresch P. Shah, CA Naresh Ajwani, and Mr. Suhas Bendre from HSBC, will share their expertise, moderated by CA Vijay Gupta. Don't miss this opportunity to deepen your understanding of FEMA's impact on professional practice. Mark your calendars for a Virtual Half-Day Seminar on "Stay & Recovery Proceedings Representation before First Appellate Authorities," scheduled in April. This seminar will delve into critical aspects of legal representation on "Representation before First Appellate Authorities" by CA Ketan Vajani, followed by a discussion on "Stay & Recovery Proceedings" by Adv. Rahul Hakani. Take this opportunity to enhance your understanding and skills in these vital areas of practice. For more details, refer to our latest newsletter.

Get ready for an immersive experience at our 17th Residential Conference on International Taxation from June 20-23 at The Leela, Gandhinagar. This gathering is not just a conference; it's an opportunity to forge networks, brotherhood, and friendships over four days, live in the world of international taxation. We're bringing together top experts like Mr. P. V. Srinivasan and CA H. Padamchand Khincha to dissect emerging trends and technologies impacting global tax practices. Set against the backdrop of Gandhinagar's luxurious Leela Hotel, our venue combines the best of Indian hospitality with the chance to participate in a meeting of minds. This event is your portal to professional growth, offering unparalleled access to knowledge and networking in a setting of leisure and luxury. So, circle the dates and prepare to join your peers in shaping the future of our profession.

In our current edition, we take a panoramic view of state incentives "OVERVIEW OF STATE FISCAL INCENTIVES", a subject that holds vast potential for our professional practice and academic understanding. The Chamber's Journal serves as a beacon, guiding us through the intricate landscape of state-level policies and incentives that are pivotal in sculpting the business terrain of our diverse country. We present an overarching view that captures the essence of diverse state policies shaping business dynamics. Our heartfelt thanks go to the Journal Committee and our contributors for their insights, providing us with a nuanced understanding of these incentives. As you peruse the articles, consider their relevance in guiding strategic decisions and advising clients adeptly.

With best wishes,

**HARESH KENIA**

*President*