

India's Message of Resilience from Kashmir: ICAI Leads Historic Council Meeting in Pahalgam

In a powerful message of unity and defiance against terror, India's resolve shone through as the country's premier accounting body, The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), convened its 445th Council Meeting in Pahalgam from August 12–14, 2025. Notably, ICAI is the world's largest Accounting Body of Chartered Accountants, symbolizing India's growing global leadership in the financial profession. This historic gathering marked the first time a national institution hosted such a high-level meeting in the Valley after the tragic Baisaran incident earlier this year, reaffirming India's determination to stand strong in the face of adversity.

The event carried immense symbolic weight, coinciding with the celebration of India's 79th Independence Day. The presence of ICAI members, families and local children in the festivities reflected the spirit of resilience and inclusivity that continues to define India's democratic ethos.

A National Statement, A Global Message

ICAI's choice to host this event in Kashmir highlights its broader commitment to peace, stability and development in regions often portrayed globally through the lens of conflict. The meeting was more than a professional congregation; it was a message to the world that Kashmir is a land of opportunity, cultural richness and enduring hope.

ICAI's Role in Nation-Building

As one of the world's largest professional accounting bodies, ICAI demonstrated how professional institutions can contribute meaningfully to economic resilience. During its three-day deliberations, ICAI proposed collaborations with the Jammu & Kashmir Government in areas such as cost optimisation, accrual-based accounting for government departments, curriculum development for universities, and accounting reforms for local bodies.

Speaking at the occasion, ICAI President **CA. Charanjot Singh Nanda** stated: *"Our presence here is more than symbolic; it is a testament to hope, resilience, and our pledge to work together for lasting peace and shared prosperity. We are not just financial architects, but we are partners in nation-building. Through this visit, we reaffirm our commitment to economic revival, vibrant tourism, and meaningful developmental collaborations in Jammu & Kashmir".*

In order to support students of the region, ICAI also offers a **75% fee waiver** for CA course registrations for students from J&K and also plans to set up a Centre of Excellence in the region to boost capacity building, research and skill development, ensuring that young talent in the Valley has pathways to global opportunities.

Support for Local Communities

More than 130 ICAI members and their families participated in the Pahalgam visit, signaling trust in the Valley and inspiring confidence among locals. The delegation's presence resonated as a call for domestic and international tourists alike to rediscover Kashmir as a safe and vibrant destination, essential for the revival of its tourism-driven economy.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister of J&K, **Shri Omar Abdullah**, expressed gratitude to convening meeting in the valley and said *"Your presence here sends a powerful message of confidence and support. It reflects your belief in this place and reassures our people that better days lie ahead. Winter is not everlasting; spring will come"*.

India's Larger Story of Resilience

For the international community, the Pahalgam meeting is emblematic of India's broader narrative, a nation that faces adversity with courage, transforms challenges into opportunities and mobilizes its institutions for inclusive growth.

ICAI Vice-President **CA. Prasanna Kumar D** captured the sentiment: *"Celebrating Independence Day here and hosting our 445th Council Meeting in Pahalgam is a moment of pride. It reflects our solidarity with the Valley, our respect for the Armed Forces, and our commitment to contribute meaningfully to J&K's growth"*.

Beyond Kashmir: ICAI's Global Footprint

With a network of **1.5 million members and students**, ICAI has been at the forefront of India's development agenda, from COVID-19 relief to supporting MSMEs and startups, promoting sustainability and assisting in border-area relief efforts like *Operation Sindoor*.

As India asserts its position as a rising global power, ICAI's work exemplifies how professional institutions are key partners in nation-building, not just within India's borders, but also in shaping international standards of governance, transparency and sustainable growth.