



Public Affairs Forum of India

Mr. Suresh Prabhu inaugurates PAFI's 3rd National Conference

The Minister urges PA professionals to work with government to make positive change in society

New Delhi, September 16, 2016: The Public Affairs Forum of India (PAFI), hosted a day-long National Conference on Public Affairs: Future of Advocacy & Shaping Public Policy, at India Habitat Centre, in New Delhi.

Inaugurated by Hon'ble Minister of Railways, Government of India Mr. Suresh Prabhu, the conference focussed on how stakeholders need to use new advocacy tools and practices to engage with stakeholders in the changing world.

The conference engaged senior bureaucrats, economists, business leaders, MPs and politicians to understand the different perspectives and views in a globally networked world where policies and decisions in one region of the world have a bearing on another. The conference also discussed new forms of advocacy that is changing the way government works.

Addressing the gathering of PA professionals from across the country, Mr. Prabhu said that "Public Affairs make a huge impact on public mind. Together we can contribute to the thought process of the country, create public opinion, shape it, and also help people to think differently."

"We need to take advantage of the current situation in India – the right leadership, the influence of leadership globally, the acceptability of the leadership in the country. It is an opportune moment to bring new ideas that can really make a change," the minister said.

"The Government cannot do it alone. It needs the support of industry and the people. Swachh Bharat is a scheme where all of us together can work and one single intervention will have a huge impact on various sectors, including public health, environment and on people themselves," he added.

Emphasising on the need for collaboration in public affairs in order to change perceptions and help build strong alliances across the whole spectrum of stakeholders he said, "The current challenge is not about the policy framework but about how to implement it.

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Government is a structured organisation society is a complex institution and hence cannot be dealt by government alone. Government needs to have working relations with civil society such as people in media, Public Affairs etc. and only then change can be brought in society. I urge you to together work on changing the mind-set of the society.”

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Sunil Kant Munjal, Chairman, Hero Corporate Services Pvt. Ltd., said: “Public Affairs must ensure that the objective of advocacy is contributing in national interest. There are four things that must come together to build a strong nation: economic strength, geopolitical influence, ability to defend the country, and cultural depth in arts, sciences, etc. It is important for Public affairs to question whether it is leading equally towards all of these four directions.”

“The role of public affairs is an important one in helping the government drive policy, rules, laws and regulations. Constructive criticism is far more helpful than just criticism. If one does the right thing, the right thing will happen. Our job is to do the right thing. No one has a monopoly on good ideas. One must encourage to experiment and partner, across the board.” he said.

Mr. Raj Chengappa, Group Editorial Director, India Today and President, Editors Guild of India, in his address said, “From Radio to Television to Laptops – complexity has given a rise to growth and is making way for evolution of public affairs in India.” “Genius is the ability to make the complex into simple. Our world is becoming complex every passing day. There is a need to bring clarity, simplicity and transparency in the advocacy so that last man in the line understands what he gets. This is where public affairs professionals can add value”, he added.

Mr Rahul Sharma, President of PAFI, said “As public affairs professionals, members have to constantly try and find ways to not beat the system, but create better value in their arguments to convince policy makers to make changes that would benefit the country.” “The conference gave us an opportunity to hear our stakeholders tell us about their expectations, which was a fantastic,” he said.

Mr. Ajay Khanna, Conference Chairman & Managing Committee Member of PAFI said, “PAFI's objective is to make public affairs more professional and fact based. It is very heartening and gratifying to see that a large number of people share our belief. Distinguished panellists, from Government, Media, Civil society and academics, impressed



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upon the need to have public affairs professionals to empower them in informed decision making.” “This indeed is a shift from the image that the profession used to enjoy. The dialogues at PAFI's 3rd national conference were very enriching and have given us ideas on key tasks that we as an organisation must take up,” he added.

Mr. Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India), Government of India, also addressed participants and guests of the Conference at the precursor dinner held on September 15.

PAFI (<http://www.pafi.in>) is the only organised platform for public affairs professionals in the country. With representation from large and medium-sized transnational Indian and foreign companies and firms, PAFI's objective is to redefine perceptions of how business entities should engage with stakeholders, from government and media to civil society and academics.

The full day Conference, with the theme of “**Public Affairs: Future of Advocacy & Shaping Public Policy**”, included discussions on the role of public affairs in reputation management, future of advocacy and steps required to professionalise public policy & public affairs. Vinay Sahasrabudhe (MP, Rajya Sabha and National Vice President, BJP) and Vijay Chauthaiwale (In-Charge, Foreign Affairs Department, BJP) addressed the Conference on '**Advocacy & Public Policy: A Party Perspective**'.

Other prominent speakers were: Kalikesh Narayan Singh Deo (MP, Lok Sabha, BJD), Harshvardhan Singh Dungarpur (MP, Rajya Sabha, BJP), Abhishek Manu Singhvi (MP, Rajya Sabha, INC), Pavan Kumar Varma (Former MP, Rajya Sabha, Member-JDU, Writer & Diplomat), S Sundareshan (Former Secretary, Government of India), D K Bhalla (Secretary, Lok Sabha Secretariat), Vinay Sheel Oberoi (Secretary, Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development). Ashish Bahuguna (Chairperson, FSSAI); Shrinivas Vashisht (Chief Governance Coordinator of Gurgaon (CGCG), Government of Haryana), Pradeep Singh, Deputy Dean & CEO Mohali Campus, Indian School of Business and Rajeev Kapoor (Director, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie).

About Public Affairs Forum of India (PAFI):

Serving as a professional resource for the Public Affairs and Corporate Affairs professionals, PAFI is dedicated to raise and maintain standards of practice in public affairs to enable the Industry to attain recognition and credibility. PAFI provides members with the platform and opportunity to exchange information, share their knowledge and experiences in engaging with external stakeholders like the government, media, industry associations, multilateral agencies and think tanks. For more information, visit: www.pafi.in

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