PAFI

13th ANNUAL FORUM 2026

INDIA 3.0 - Engaging for Growth in a Disrupted World

IDEAS | INSIGHTS | IMPACT

24 - 25 SEPTEMBER 2026

NEW DELHI

Partner States:

Andhra Pradesh

Tamil Nadu

Guidance TamilNadu

Programme*

Thursday, 24 September 2026 – 0830 to 2200 hrs
Friday, 25 September 2026 – 0830 to 1730 hrs

www.pafi.in

**as on 22 September 2026*
Subject to change

Day 1 *Thursday*, 24 September 2026 0830 to 2200 hrs

Venue: Taj Mahal, Mansingh Road, New Delhi

0830 – 0930 Registration and Networking over Tea / Coffee

Please note:

- ***This program is exclusively for registered delegates.***
- *Please wear your delegate badge at all times. For security reasons, access to the sessions will not be granted without a valid badge.*
- *All sessions will be held in **Mansingh 1** except the parallel sessions titled **"PAFI@Varq."***
- *The **"PAFI@Varq"** sessions will take place in **Varq** (located on the same floor). Seating for these sessions is limited to 40 attendees on a first-come, first-served basis.*
- *Delegates are requested to be seated by **09:30 hrs**.*
- *Speakers marked with an asterisk (*) are invited, pending final confirmation.*
- *All sessions are designed to be conversational and interactive, concluding with a dedicated audience Q&A.*
- *All sessions are open to media and are on record.*

0940 – 0950 | **Opening Remarks** **Ajay Khanna**
Founder, PAFI
Chairman Emeritus, PAFI Annual Forum

1000 – 1045 | **Session 1—Inaugural Leadership Address**

India 3.0: What Will Define India's Next Decade?

India stands at the threshold of a defining decade. Transitioning to a developed nation requires massive structural upgrades that seamlessly bridge physical connectivity with digital public goods. In FY 2026-27, the government has committed an unprecedented capital expenditure of ₹12.2 lakh crore—powering everything from seven new high-speed rail corridors to an expansive indigenous semiconductor ecosystem. With real GDP growth estimated at 7.4% in FY26, the overarching strategic priority is shifting from foundational capacity building to seamless integration into high-value global supply chains.

This opening conversation explores the priorities that will shape India's journey towards becoming a developed nation. By synchronising cutting-edge tech innovation with next-generation rail and logistics networks, the session will examine how India plans to sustain high growth, foster resilient job creation, and permanently anchor itself as a globally competitive economic powerhouse.

- What strategic policy choices over the next decade will be most critical to sustaining a 7–8% growth trajectory toward becoming a developed nation?
- What structural shifts are needed to move Indian industry from cost efficiency toward high-value, indigenous innovation and quality job creation?

Welcome and Moderator	**Shivnath Thukral** President, PAFI Vice President of Public Policy and Government Affairs PhonePe Limited
Chief Guest	**Ashwini Vaishnaw** Minister of Electronics and Information Technology Minister of Information and Broadcasting Minister of Railways Government of India
Discussant	**Virat Bhatia** Past President, PAFI Co-Chair, PAFI Annual Forum
Closing remarks	**Major Ranjeet Goswami, Retd.** Vice President, PAFI Global Head, Corporate Affairs, TATA Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS)

1050 – 1120 | **Session 2— PAFI Conversation**

Inside the State: How Government Thinks, Decides and Gets Things Done

For public affairs and corporate leaders navigating the complex world of advocacy, understanding the internal mechanics of government is a critical tool for success. Public policy rarely moves in a straight line from intent to implementation; rather, it is heavily shaped by institutional realities, competing departmental priorities and the intricate, often unseen machinery of the State.

This candid conversation aims to demystify how government actually thinks, processes information and executes on the ground. Drawing on decades of firsthand experience across governance, public policy and investment promotion, this session offers a rare, unfiltered look "inside the State." The dialogue will explore what truly makes policymakers listen, how stakeholders can build constructive, trust-based relationships and what it takes for industry leaders to move beyond transactional lobbying to engage meaningfully and durably with the government.

- What are the unseen institutional realities and competing priorities that dictate how a policy moves from an initial idea to final implementation on the ground?
- When engaging with the State, what specific approaches, narratives and data points actually resonate and make policymakers listen to external stakeholders?
- What essential skills, frameworks and mindsets must public affairs professionals develop to foster constructive, long-term partnerships with government decision-makers?

Bharat Lal
Former Secretary General and CEO
National Human Rights Commission
Founder Mission Director
Jal Jeevan Mission

in conversation with,

Ajay Khanna
Founder, PAFI
Chairman Emeritus, PAFI Annual Forum

Welcome

Harish Krishnan
Co-Founder & Past President, PAFI
Managing Director & Chief Policy officer
Cisco South and Southeast Asia

1125 – 1215 | **Session 3—Partner State: Andhra Pradesh**

Andhra Pradesh - SwarnaAndhra@2047: The New Growth Laboratory

Andhra Pradesh is charting an ambitious roadmap to achieve a $2.4 trillion economy, anchored firmly in its visionary 'SwarnaAndhra@2047' framework. Positioned as India's "New Growth Laboratory," the state is shifting its regulatory philosophy from the traditional 'ease of doing business' to a forward-looking 'speed of doing business' model to attract high-value manufacturing and global capital. This investment-led growth strategy is powered by data-driven governance, timely policy reforms, and pioneering human capacity building—most notably through India's first comprehensive 'Skill Census' and a robust hub-and-spoke Innovation Hub network. Furthermore, by championing the novel 'P4 Model' (Public-Private-People Partnership) for zero poverty and the 'One Family, One Entrepreneur' initiative for MSMEs, the state is actively proving that grassroots economic inclusion and global competitiveness can scale together. This session examines Andhra Pradesh's long-term reform agenda, exploring how speed and strategic infrastructure development will drive the next wave of economic transformation.

- How will the transition from the 'ease' to the 'speed' of doing business redefine state governance in securing high-value global investments?
- How can government and India Inc. collaboratively translate the $2.4 trillion target into tangible market expansion and formal job creation?

Welcome	**Rakesh Swami** Group President - Corporate Affairs Godrej Industries Group
Moderator	**Arijit Sen** President Vivo Mobile India Private Limited
Chief Guest	**Nara Lokesh** Minister of Human Resources Development Minister for Information Technology, Electronics and Communications Minister of Real Time Governance Government of Andhra Pradesh
Discussant	**Y. Guruswamy Naidu** Founder and CMD Celkon Group
Closing remarks	**Sunita Patnaik** Partner and Head of India Office DGA Group

1130 - 1230 | Parallel Session | **PAFI@Varq Session V- 4** *(Panel discussion)*

Women in Public Affairs: Breaking the Invisible Barriers

Public policy and public affairs are fundamentally about influence, shaping critical conversations,, navigating complex institutions, and securing a seat where decisions are made. While female participation has grown significantly, emerging leaders - particularly women in the critical 20–40 age bracket who are vying for senior executive roles and continue to encounter "invisible barriers." These unwritten rules, expectations, and structural constraints often make it disproportionately harder to build influence, gain access, and advance in a highly competitive landscape.

The dialogue will tackle the unvarnished realities of navigating power, the critical need for active sponsorship over passive mentorship, and the structural shifts required from all stakeholders - including institutional leaders and male allies to level the playing field. The conversation aims to equip the next generation of women with the actionable insights and strategic networks required to break through to the highest levels of corporate statesmanship and public policy.

- What are the invisible barriers, unwritten rules, and structural constraints that disproportionately hinder mid-career women from building influence and accessing rooms of power?
- What does it practically take to succeed and navigate power dynamics in public affairs, and what hard-learned lessons about visibility, networking, and securing active sponsorship must be shared?
- What actionable changes must organizations, institutional leaders, and the wider ecosystem make to dismantle these barriers, and what does meaningful, systemic equity actually look like?

Welcome and Moderator	**Deepshikha Dharmaraj** Past President, PAFI Chief Executive Office Burson Group India
Panellists	**Natasha Jog** Director, Public Policy Meta
	Virat Bhatia Past President, PAFI Co-Chair, PAFI Annual Forum
	Anita Kumar Senior Manager, Government Affairs Cisco Systems India
Closing remarks	**Ophira Bhatia** Vice President - Corporate & Government Affairs (CGA), India CGA Lead, Asia Pacific, Middle East & Africa Mondelez International

Please note: Women delegates will get priority to attend this session.

1220 – 1320 | **Session 5— India and Europe** *(Panel discussion)*

Beyond the FTA: Building the Next Chapter of the India–Europe Partnership

Europe is entering a new chapter in its partnership with India. The conclusion of the landmark India-European Union Free Trade Agreement in January 2026, together with the implementation of the India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) in October 2025, signals a step change in economic engagement. The EU FTA secures preferential access across 97% of EU tariff lines, while TEPA introduces an ambitious framework aiming for a $100 billion investment commitment over 15 years to create one million direct jobs in India. The relationship now extends far beyond transactional trade to encompass critical technologies, clean energy, and resilient supply chains. As the nation targets unprecedented scale in the India 3.0 era, translating these historic agreements into tangible market expansion and investment is the next strategic frontier.

- How can government and corporate affairs leaders collaboratively operationalise the massive $100 billion investment mandate under TEPA to drive advanced manufacturing and job creation?
- What specific regulatory frameworks must public policy professionals navigate to help Indian MSMEs and tech enterprises seamlessly integrate into European value chains following the January 2026 EU FTA conclusion?
- In what ways can India and Europe align their digital public infrastructure and clean energy standards to ensure that non-tariff barriers do not impede cross-border market expansion?
- How must multinational and domestic corporations adapt their supply chain strategies to leverage the new tariff concessions and strategic mobility pathways established across the European bloc?

Welcome	**Anandi Iyer** Director Fraunhofer Office India
Moderator	**Ajay Bisaria** Corporate Strategic Advisor Former High Commissioner of India to Canada and Pakistan
Panellists	**Amb. Jawed Ashraf** Chairman Indian Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO)
	Amb. Jean-Eric Paquet Ambassador Designate of the European Union to India and Bhutan
	Amb. Rasmus Abildgaard Kristensen Ambassador Royal Danish Embassy
Closing remarks	**Vaishali Chopra** Head – Public Affairs and Communications, India YARA International

1245 - 1315 | Parallel Session | **PAFI@Varq Session V - 6 – PAFI Conversation**

The Middle East Reset: What it Means for India

The geopolitical landscape of the Middle East is undergoing a profound transformation. As regional power equations shift, shaped by the evolving dynamics between the US, China, Iran and the Gulf states, the implications for global stability and economic growth are immense. For India, a region that is vital for energy security, trade, diaspora relations and strategic connectivity, navigating this reset requires deep, nuanced understanding that goes well beyond the daily headlines.

Designed as part of the exclusive PAFI Conversations series, this intimate, 40-person session discards the conventional panel format in favour of a candid, unscripted dialogue. The conversation will provide a rare opportunity to explore the underlying forces driving the Middle East reset. By following spontaneous threads rather than a rigid agenda, the discussion will decode exactly what these complex regional shifts mean for India's energy dependencies, trade corridors and wider strategic interests in the India 3.0 era.

- How are the evolving power dynamics between the US, China, Iran and the Gulf states fundamentally reshaping the geopolitical architecture of the Middle East?
- What are the immediate and long-term implications of this regional volatility for India's energy security, trade networks and strategic connectivity projects?
- As power equations shift, how must Indian enterprises and policy professionals adjust their strategic outlook to navigate both the risks and emerging opportunities in the region?

Navdeep Suri
Former Indian Ambassador to UAE and Egypt,
and High Commissioner to Australia

in conversation with,

Rahul Sharma
Founding Member & Past President, PAFI
Managing Director
US India Business Council (USIBC)

1320 – 1400 | **Networking Lunch at Mansingh 3, 4 and Verandah**

1400 – 1455 | **Session 7— Future Leaders Dialogue** *(Panel discussion)*

Leading India 2047: The Next Leap

With a median age of just 29.2 years in 2026, India possesses a demographic advantage that is a formidable engine for growth. However, realising the vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047 requires more than just youthful energy—it demands a robust synergy between agile, next-generation thinking and deeply rooted institutional scale. This unique panel brings together young parliamentarians, deep-tech innovators, and policy experts alongside seasoned champions of India's manufacturing sector.

Together, they will explore how "Young India" envisions the next wave of structural reforms, advanced domestic manufacturing, and technological integration. The conversation aims to forge an intergenerational consensus, bridging the disruptive aspirations of youth-led enterprises and digital hubs with the practical realities of industrial scaling and legislative governance. By grounding ambitious ideas in actionable policy, the session will chart how next-generation tech and massive manufacturing capacity can combine to secure India's global competitiveness.

- Where do next-gen priorities across deep tech, digital policy, and advanced electronics manufacturing differ from traditional approaches, and how can they be integrated into a shared roadmap for 2047?
- How can the fresh perspectives of youth-led enterprise and agile startup culture actively inform long-term legislative decision-making and industrial strategy?
- What specific public-private synergies are required to scale India's emerging aerospace ecosystems and massive electronics manufacturing capacity into undisputed global leadership?

Welcome	**Rakesh Dubey** Treasurer, PAFI Director - Global Government Affairs Carlyle Group
Moderator	**R. Sukumar** Editor-in-Chief Hindustan Times
Panellists	**Shashank Mani** Member of Parliament Lok Sabha
	Aparajita Bharti Co-Founder The Quantum Hub and Young Leaders for Active Citizenship
	Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayalu Member of Parliament Lok Sabha
	Shobhit Mathur Co-Founder and Vice Chancellor Rishihood University
Closing remarks	**Sudhir Zutshi** Director - Policy and Strategy, Asia Pacific UL Solutions

1400 - 1500 | Parallel Session | **PAFI@Varq Session V- 8** *(Panel discussion)*

Beyond Tariffs: Envisioning the Next Trajectory of India's FTAs

As India enters its next phase of outward-looking growth, its Free Trade Agreements will need to deliver far more than tariff concessions. Recent agreements have given India valuable implementation experience - and important lessons on what it takes to convert market access into real economic opportunity.

In the context of India 3.0: Engaging for Growth in a Disrupted World, this conversation looks at the next trajectory of India's FTAs: how to deepen integration into global value chains, address non-tariff barriers and evolving standards, strengthen export competitiveness, and ensure that the benefits of trade reach businesses and districts across India.

The central question is simple but consequential: how can India move from signing FTAs to making them engines of growth, competitiveness and global integration

Welcome	**K.C. Ravi** Co-Founder & Past President PAFI
Moderator	**T.S. Vishwanath** Founding Member & Past President, PAFI Founder & Executive Chairman VeK Policy
Panellists	**J.S. Deepak** Former Ambassador of India to the WTO
	Dr. Rajeev Ranjan Former Secretary to Government of India
	Sunjay Sudhir Former Indian Ambassador to the UAE
	Pranab Dhal Samanta Executive Editor The Economic Times
Closing remarks	**Devashish Dasgupta** Director – Corporate Relations Diageo India

1500 – 1600 | **Session 9— Secretaries' Dialogue** *(Panel discussion)*

Incentivising Innovation: Agile Policy Frameworks for Future Ready India

As India accelerates towards becoming a developed nation by 2047, the concept of "innovation" extends far beyond emerging technologies—it requires a fundamental modernisation of how the state governs, regulates, and facilitates economic growth. To remain globally competitive, benefit from trade agreements and absorb complex geopolitical shifts, the government is pioneering agile policy frameworks that transition the regulatory environment from a system of control to an engine of enablement.

This Secretaries' Dialogue brings together top decision-makers to explore how the government is redesigning the bureaucratic architecture to support a future-ready economy. The conversation will focus on breaking down institutional silos, modernising outdated compliance structures, and deploying dynamic regulations that can adapt to rapid market changes across all sectors. By examining these structural shifts, the session will outline how continuous, cross-ministry collaboration is actively dismantling friction, enhancing the ease of doing business, and incentivising broad-based innovation across the Indian economy.

- How is the government shifting from traditional, static regulatory models to agile, growth-enabling frameworks that can respond quickly to evolving global and domestic markets?
- What immediate structural reforms and cross-ministry collaborations are most critical to dismantling institutional silos and improving the broader ease of doing business?
- How can the state and private sector better align to modernise compliance, de-risk investments, and foster a culture of cross-sectoral innovation for India 3.0?

Welcome	**Sandeep Aurora** Secretary, PAFI Group Director & Head - Public Policy & Government Affairs Microsoft India & South Asia
Moderator	**Major Ranjeet Goswami, Retd.** Vice President, PAFI Global Head, Corporate Affairs, TATA Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS)
Panellists	**Dr Saurabh Garg** Secretary Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation Government of India
	V. Vualnam Secretary Department of Expenditure Ministry of Finance Government of India
	Hari Ranjan Rao Secretary Department of Sports Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports Government of India
	Rajesh Agrawal Secretary Ministry of Commerce and Industry Government of India
Closing remarks	**Rishi Chawla** Vice President – Corporate Affairs Carlsberg India

1600 – 1630 | **Networking tea and coffee at Mansingh 3, 4 and Verandah**

1630 – 1715 | **Session 10—Leadership Dialogue**

Building India at Scale: Securing India's Energy Future in a Disrupted World

India's economic growth depends on securing reliable and sustainable energy at scale. The nation is expanding its refining capacity from 258 million metric tonnes per annum (MMTPA) to 310 MMTPA by 2030, with long-term goals reaching up to 450 MMTPA. Simultaneously, India is accelerating its energy transition by building a robust green hydrogen ecosystem and expanding natural gas infrastructure. As global supply chains face unprecedented disruptions, achieving a secure energy future requires massive capital execution. This dialogue explores how government and industry can collaborate to balance traditional fuel security with clean energy adoption. The conversation will focus on scaling infrastructure, attracting investment, and keeping India globally competitive.

- What strategic investments are most critical to balance immediate energy security with the transition to clean fuels?
- How can industry and government collaborate to rapidly scale refining capacity and clean energy integration?
- In a disrupted global market, what policy frameworks will ensure stable and affordable energy for the Indian economy?

Welcome	**Ajay Khanna** Founder, PAFI Chairman Emeritus, PAFI Annual Forum
Moderator	**Navdeep Suri** Former Indian Ambassador to UAE and Egypt, and High Commissioner to Australia
Chief Guest	**Hardeep Singh Puri** Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Government of India
Closing remarks	**Mitali Sarkar** Head of Communications bp India and South Asia

1630 – 1730 | Parallel Session | **PAFI@Varq Session V - 11** *(Panel Discussion)*

AI, Young India and the Future of Opportunity

Artificial intelligence is fundamentally transforming how we work, learn, build enterprise and create value. For India's vast youth demographic, this shift presents extraordinary potential whilst raising critical questions around employment, skills acquisition, access and economic inequality. As emerging technologies reshape traditional career pathways, determining whether AI will act as a genuine equaliser or entrench existing divides has become an urgent national priority.

Organised in collaboration with YLAC, this session brings together dynamic young voices alongside leaders from technology, enterprise, education and public policy for an intergenerational dialogue. Moving beyond conventional rhetoric, the conversation will examine the tangible realities confronting young Indians in an AI-driven economy. The discussion will focus on modernising skilling frameworks, democratising digital infrastructure and fostering youth-led innovation, outlining how policy and industry can ensure that the next generation actively drives and benefits from India's growth.

- How can India ensure that artificial intelligence acts as an economic equaliser, opening access to high-value skills and entrepreneurship rather than widening existing socioeconomic divides?
- What fundamental shifts are required across higher education and vocational training to prepare young professionals for an AI-augmented workforce?
- How can government and industry collaborate to build inclusive digital infrastructure that empowers young innovators outside major metropolitan hubs?

Welcome	**Shipra Baduni** Chief Executive Officer Young Leaders for Active Citizenship (YLAC)
Moderator	**Anil Padmanabhan** Senior Journalist
Panellist	**Kainaat Arif** Author, Artist and International Relations Enthusiast
	Lovneesh Chanana Sr. Vice President Asia Pacific Head for Government Affairs SAP
	Pragya Misra Head of Strategy and Global Affairs, India OpenAI
Closing remarks	**Rakesh Dubey** Treasurer, PAFI Director - Global Government Affairs Carlyle Group

In collaboration with: **Young Leaders for Active Citizenship (YLAC)**

Please note: Delegates under 35 will get priority to attend this session.

1720 – 1820 | **Session 12— Boardroom 2030** *(Panel discussion)*

Leading Through Disruption: Strategy, Innovation & India's Next Growth Story

The era of frictionless globalisation is over. Today, corporate governance must navigate geopolitical fragmentation, weaponised trade, and a global pivot towards economic security. Boards can no longer rely solely on cost-efficiency; they must actively de-risk operations through "China Plus One" strategies, friend-shoring, and secure supply chains. Concurrently, tapping into India's booming domestic economy, projected to become the world's third-largest consumer market by 2027, requires renewed market expansion strategies. Furthermore, the rapid adoption of artificial intelligence and escalating energy demands require proactive risk management. Crucially, navigating these compounding risks requires boards to leverage diverse perspectives, making the elevation of women in leadership a strategic imperative for resilient governance. This panel brings together senior corporate leaders to explore the new boardroom agenda. The discussion will focus on how companies can sharpen their geopolitical radar, balance technological disruption with resilience, and capture growth during the India 3.0 era.

- Looking ahead to 2030, how must corporate boards evolve to balance short-term disruptions with long-term strategic vision?
- How can corporate leaders build resilient supply chains to protect operations against rising geopolitical fragmentation and cross-border trade conflicts?
- What new capabilities must organisations build to expand domestic market share while managing unpredictable global markets?

Welcome	**Abhishek Lahiri** Vice President and Head Government Affairs and Public Policy - South Asia Mastercard
Moderator	**Ashok Kumar Bhattacharya** Editorial Director Business Standard
Panellists	**Nivruti Rai** Managing Director and CEO Invest India
	Pramath Sinha Founder and Trustee, Ashoka University Founding Senior Partner, Jetri
	Nithyashree S. Associate Vice President New Initiatives & Chief of Staff The ePlane Company
	Pooja Goyal Founding CEO Udaiti Foundation
Closing remarks	**Yashika Singh** Chief Corporate Affairs Officer and Head, Sustainability – India and South Asia PepsiCo

1745 - 1845 | Parallel Session | **PAFI@Varq Session V - 13** *(Panel Discussion)*

India–China: The Thaw, the Challenges and the Road Ahead

The relationship between India and China has entered a critical new phase. Following the recent BRICS Summit in New Delhi and the much-anticipated bilateral discussions between Prime Minister Modi and President Xi Jinping, both nations are attempting to stabilise ties after years of strategic mistrust. While institutional dialogue has resumed and border tensions have eased into a cautious thaw, the fundamental competitive nature of the relationship remains.

This panel discussion will explore what a "new equilibrium" between the two Asian giants could look like. Guided by the principles of mutual respect, mutual sensitivity and mutual interest, the conversation will examine whether this diplomatic stabilisation is the beginning of a genuine reset or simply a pragmatic pause. The dialogue will tackle the difficult questions facing India today: how to manage a widening trade deficit without compromising national security, how greater stability on the border can create space for wider economic engagement, and how both countries can coexist while pursuing competing geopolitical visions across the Indo-Pacific and the Global South.

- Does the recent diplomatic thaw and the focus on the "three mutuals" signal a genuine reset in India-China relations, or merely a pragmatic pause in a long-term strategic rivalry?
- How can India balance its growing economic engagement and address the widening trade deficit with China while firmly safeguarding its national security and border interests?
- As both nations expand their influence in the Indo-Pacific and the Global South, can greater stability on the border create space for cooperation on global issues even as competition continues?

Welcome	**Arijit Sen** President Vivo Mobile India Private Limited
Moderator	**Rahul Sharma** Founding Member & Past President, PAFI Managing Director US India Business Council (USIBC)
Panellists	**Ashok Kantha** Former Ambassador of India to China Former Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs
	Ashok Malik Partner and Chair - India Practice The Asia Group
	Dr Sanjaya Baru Former Editor Financial Express & Business Standard
Closing remarks	**Rajeev Batra** Past President and Founding Member PAFI

1825 – 1855 | **Session 14— PAFI Conversation**

The Future of Influence: Global Public Affairs, Women in Policy & Leadership

As geopolitics, technology, regulation and public expectations reshape the global operating environment, the practice of public affairs is undergoing a profound transformation. What are the emerging global trends telling us about how influence is built, trust is earned and policy is shaped?

Drawing on her global perspective as President & CEO of the Public Affairs Council, **Nneka Chiazor** will share her insights on the changing public-affairs landscape across markets, the impact of new technologies and geopolitical shifts, and the evolving expectations of business leaders. The conversation will also examine the critical role of women in policy and leadership, and what organisations must do to ensure that women move from participation to positions of influence.

Against the backdrop of India's growing global role, the conversation will explore what these shifts mean for Indian businesses and public-affairs professionals—and how the next generation of leaders can shape the global policy agenda.

Nneka Chiazor
President and CEO
Public Affairs Council
USA

in conversation with,

Natasha Jog
Director, Public Policy
Meta

1900 – 1945 | **Session 15— Special Leadership Address**

India 3.0: Engaging for Growth in a Disrupted World

At a time when global trade, investment flows, and industrial policies are being reshaped by geopolitical and geoeconomic developments, India has a unique opportunity to emerge as one of the world's most trusted economic partners. Through an ambitious agenda of trade agreements, ease of doing business, and investment promotion, the nation is steadily advancing its position in global value chains. With total exports reaching $863 billion in 2025-26, the government has set a bold target of achieving $1 trillion in exports for the current financial year, scaling up to a monumental $2 trillion over the next five years.

Achieving this vision requires Indian industry to step beyond its "comfortable" domestic market, scale manufacturing quality, and actively build "Brand India" abroad. This closing Leadership Dialogue explores India's evolving trade and industrial strategy. The conversation will focus on the immense opportunities arising from global supply chain realignments, the strategic role of Free Trade Agreements, and the vital policy reforms needed to cement India's global competitiveness and export-led growth in the India 3.0 era.

- How can Indian industry effectively capitalise on global supply chain realignments and leverage the expanding network of Free Trade Agreements to secure preferential market access?
- What structural reforms and manufacturing strategies are required to move beyond domestic reliance and achieve the $2 trillion export target over the next five years?
- How can government and the private sector collaborate to foster innovation, elevate quality standards, and permanently cement India's role as a trusted partner in global value chains?

Welcome	**Shivnath Thukral** President, PAFI Vice President of Public Policy and Government Affairs PhonePe Limited
Moderator	**Virat Bhatia** Past President, PAFI Co-Chair, PAFI Annual Forum
Chief Guest	**Piyush Goyal** Minister of Commerce and Industry Government of India
Closing remarks	**Major Ranjeet Goswami, Retd.** Vice President, PAFI Global Head, Corporate Affairs, TATA Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS)

1945 – 2200 | **Gala Dinner**

Catch Lokesh Madan Live! Get ready for a high-energy, immersive experience with multi-award-winning singer, songwriter, and performer Lokesh Madan. Expect a show spanning everything from soulful Bollywood melodies to electrifying rock anthems.

Day 2 ***Friday*****, 25 September 2026** **0830 to 1730 hrs**

Venue: Taj Mahal, Mansingh Road, New Delhi

0830 – 0945 **Registration and Networking over Tea / Coffee**

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1005 – 1045 | **Session 16—Leadership Dialogue**

Awaken the Leader in You

What truly makes a leader? As Day Two begins, we have the privilege of hearing **Jaya Row**, one of India's leading exponents of Vedanta, explore the unseen forces that shape leadership — how we think, what drives us, how we respond under pressure, and how we influence those around us.

Drawing from Vedanta and the wisdom of the Bhagavad Gita, Jaya Row will look beyond position, authority and conventional leadership skills to examine the inner qualities that enable individuals to inspire purpose, bring out the best in others and translate potential into meaningful impact. The talk will explore why some leaders create trust and commitment, why some teams flourish under their leadership, and why talent alone does not always translate into greatness.

Participants will gain a clearer understanding of how self-awareness, clarity of thought, emotional steadiness and purpose can strengthen their leadership — and how greater awareness of their own beliefs, reactions and motivations can lead to better decisions and more effective leadership. A thoughtful way to begin Day Two — with an opportunity to look within and awaken the leader in you.

Welcome	**Vinita Sethi** Past President PAFI
Address	**Jaya Row** Founder Vedanta Vision

1045 – 1130 | **Session 17—Leadership Dialogue**

India's Green Growth Story: Sustainability, Competitiveness and Global Leadership.

India stands at a pivotal moment where economic growth and environmental stewardship are no longer competing priorities but mutually reinforcing drivers of national progress. As global markets increasingly reward sustainable production, resilient supply chains and responsible business practices, India's commitment to climate action, resource efficiency and ecological conservation is emerging as a source of strategic advantage. Under the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, the country has the opportunity to demonstrate that rapid development and sustainability can advance together.

This Leadership Dialogue will explore how India's environmental policies, climate commitments and green growth agenda are strengthening the nation's competitiveness, attracting investment, fostering innovation and creating new opportunities for industry. The conversation will also examine the role of government and business in building a resilient, low-carbon economy that positions India as a global leader in sustainable development while delivering inclusive and long-term economic growth. This is a timely discussion on how sustainability can become one of the defining pillars of India 3.0—an India that leads not only through the scale of its economy, but also through the quality, resilience and responsibility of its growth.

- How can government and business partner to translate climate commitments into long-term economic competitiveness?
- In what ways can India's green growth agenda attract global capital and create new opportunities for industry?
- What policy frameworks are needed to ensure that rapid economic expansion aligns with resource efficiency and ecological conservation?

Welcome	**Rajat Prakash** Managing Partner Athena Legal
Moderator	**Navika Kumar** Group Editor-in-Chief Times Network and Times Now Navbharat
Chief Guest	**Bhupender Yadav** Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Government of India
Closing remarks	**Daulata Chakraborty** Associate Director – Corporate Affairs Jubilant Ingrevia Limited

1130 – 1230 | **Session 18—Partner State: Tamil Nadu**

Tamil Nadu: Vetri Tamizhagam – Building a Global Growth and Investment Powerhouse

Tamil Nadu is driving a new era of economic growth, anchored by the *'Vetri Tamizhagam'* vision. The State is charting an ambitious roadmap focused on developing world-class infrastructure, advancing youth skilling, and strengthening healthcare and the environment. To support this, the government is actively consulting with industry leaders to design a new industrial policy for 2027. This strategy has a clear, dual focus: attracting high-tech investments in sectors like green energy and electronics, while also creating thousands of formal jobs in traditional manufacturing. Tamil Nadu is seamlessly combining inclusive welfare with an agile, high-growth economic ecosystem. By building a highly business-friendly environment, the State is positioning itself as a future-ready powerhouse and a key leader in the India 3.0 era.

- What are the main priorities of Tamil Nadu's upcoming industrial policy, and how will it make it easier for companies to invest and operate in the State?
- How can the government and the private sector work together to advance youth skilling, ensuring the workforce is fully prepared for future tech and manufacturing jobs?
- How can the State build modern, ready-to-use industrial infrastructure that helps businesses grow and connect with global supply chains?

Welcome	**Rishi Chawla** Vice President – Corporate Affairs, Carlsberg India
Moderator	**Harish Krishnan** Co-Founder & Past President, PAFI Managing Director and Chief Policy officer Cisco South and Southeast Asia
Chief Guest	**S. Keerthana** Minister of Industries, Investment Promotion and Commerce Government of Tamil Nadu
Discussant	**Raman Sidhu** Past President and Founding Member, PAFI Chairman, EBG Federation, India
Closing remarks	**Lovneesh Chanana** Sr. Vice President Asia Pacific Head for Government Affairs SAP

1130 – 1230 | Parallel Session | **PAFI@Varq Session V- 19** *(Panel Discussion)*

Public Affairs Reimagined: The Leaders We Need Next

Public affairs is undergoing a fundamental transformation. The profession today extends well beyond traditional government relations, sitting squarely at the intersection of corporate strategy, geopolitics, digital platforms and societal shifts. As artificial intelligence and new technologies redefine how information is created and influence is built, a critical question emerges: what must the next generation learn, unlearn and rethink to lead public affairs in an increasingly complex world?

Conceived as an intergenerational dialogue, this session bridges the gap between established global leadership and the emerging cohort of policy professionals. Rather than a conventional career advisory panel, the conversation will offer a candid, forward-looking exploration of how the profession is changing. The discussion will navigate the new capabilities and mindsets required to succeed, examining how technology and shifting institutions are rewriting the rules of engagement. Ultimately, the session will address how today's organisations and professional bodies can better prepare and create meaningful pathways for the next generation, ensuring they are equipped to drive the ambitious vision of India 3.0.

- How are emerging technologies like AI, shifting geopolitical dynamics and new forms of public engagement fundamentally rewriting the rules of the public affairs profession?
- What specific capabilities, cross-sector experiences and mindsets will distinguish the most effective public affairs leaders of tomorrow?
- How can current industry leaders, organisations and professional bodies better prepare, sponsor and create structured pathways for the next generation of policy professionals?

Welcome	**Vaishali Chopra** Head – Public Affairs and Communications, India YARA International
Moderator	**Smriti Sharma** Head – Policy and Strategy Apple India
Panellists	**Nneka Chiazor** President and Chief Executive Officer Public Affairs Council USA
	Shubhashis Gangopadhyay Managing Trustee and Research Director India Development Foundation (IDF)
	Ishteyaque Amjad Past President, PAFI and Co-Chair, PAFI Annual Forum Managing Director Policy & Government Affairs India and South Asia Abbott
	Neha Karnik General Manager – Corporate Affairs Godrej Industries Group
Closing remarks	**Saurabh Singh** Country Leader - Public Policy and Government Affairs Optum India

Please note: Delegates under 35 will get priority to attend this session.

1230 – 1315 | **Session 20—Leadership Dialogue**

India's Next Growth Decade: Navigating Geoeconomics in a Disrupted World

India's potential growth rate has recently been revised upward to 7.0%, reflecting the compounding gains of structural reforms, robust public investment, and improved logistics. Despite a fragmented global environment marked by unilateral trade tariffs and geopolitical friction, the domestic economy retains significant momentum, with FY26 real GDP growth projected at over 7% and investment activity showing sharp acceleration. As the nation seeks to balance growth maximisation with shock absorption, the overarching economic philosophy is shifting toward 'delayed gratification' — prioritising long-term resilience and capacity building over short-term fixes. With a firm trajectory set to achieve a $5 trillion economy by 2026-27 and scale to a $10 trillion economy by 2033-34, navigating this path requires the private sector to move beyond cost arbitrage. Deep investments in continuous skilling and innovation are essential to counter technological disruptions like artificial intelligence and anchor India 3.0 as a global economic powerhouse.

- How can India future-proof its macroeconomic trajectory to sustain a 7-8% growth rate, transforming global disruptions into strategic opportunities to reach the $10 trillion milestone by 2033-34?
- What next-generation structural reforms must the government and private sector co-create to shift the nation's focus from foundational capacity building to seamless integration into high-value global supply chains?
- As rapid technological shifts redefine global competitiveness, how can industry and policymakers collaborate to build indigenous innovation ecosystems and cultivate a highly skilled, future-ready workforce?

Welcome	**T.S. Vishwanath** Founding Member & Past President, PAFI Founder & Executive Chairman VeK Policy
Moderator	**Gautam Aggarwal** President, India and South Asia Mastercard
Chief Guest	**Dr V Anantha Nageswaran** Chief Economic Advisor Government of India
Closing remarks	**Shipra Tripathi** Vice President, Public Affairs Ashoka University

1245 – 1315 | Parallel Session | **PAFI@Varq Session V- 21— PAFI Conversation**

Beyond Access: The Future of Public Affairs in India

The public affairs ecosystem in India is undergoing a profound evolution. The traditional models of access and relationship-based advocacy are rapidly giving way to a new paradigm rooted in ideas, evidence, trust and measurable impact. As the nation scales towards India 3.0, the intricate relationship between business, government and society is being fundamentally rewritten.

This candid conversation explores the changing expectations of corporate engagement in an era defined by digital platforms, rapid technological advancement and a highly informed citizenry. Looking beyond conventional institutional roles, the dialogue will examine how modern public affairs must operate at the intersection of technology, media and governance. The discussion will highlight how industry leaders can effectively balance legitimate corporate advocacy with a broader, long-term responsibility to India's national development, ultimately shaping better and more resilient public policy.

- How has the public affairs profession transitioned from access-driven advocacy towards evidence-based policymaking, and what does the government now expect from enterprise compared to a decade ago?
- In what ways have digital platforms, social media and a more engaged citizenry transformed the broader public policy conversation and the mechanics of corporate engagement?
- Where does legitimate corporate advocacy intersect with a broader responsibility to national development, and what is the definitive blueprint for public affairs in India 3.0?

Shivnath Thukral
President, PAFI
Vice President of Public Policy and Government Affairs
PhonePe Limited

in conversation with,

Subho Ray
Past President, PAFI
President
Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI)

1315 – 1400 | **Networking Lunch at Mansingh 3, 4 and Verandah**

1400 – 1500 | **Session 22— Secretaries' Dialogue** *(Panel Discussion)*

Building India's Competitive Advantage

To sustain its economic momentum and integrate deeper into global value chains, India is embarking on a comprehensive governance and economic reform agenda. Across ministries, massive efforts are underway to structurally enhance both the Ease of Doing Business and the Ease of Living. This involves targeted initiatives to repeal redundant or obsolete laws, streamline complex compliance burdens, and build world-class industrial infrastructure. With dedicated deregulation cells and cross-sectoral reforms in motion, policy is actively aligning to support growth across the spectrum, from accelerating advanced manufacturing to unlocking mass employment through tourism.

This Secretaries' Dialogue brings together senior policymakers to evaluate the specific policy initiatives that will define the next decade of growth. The conversation will focus on regulatory rationalisation, the implementation of global standards, regional development and the inter-ministerial collaboration required to cement India's competitive advantage on the world stage.

- Which specific reform or policy initiative will have the greatest impact on India's economic competitiveness over the next decade?
- How are various ministries collaborating to advance both the Ease of Doing Business and the Ease of Living, ensuring that high-level policy reforms translate into tangible on-ground realities?
- What strategies are being deployed to align domestic quality and governance standards with global benchmarks?

Welcome	**Aman Jain** Senior Director and Head of Public Policy, India Meta
Moderator	**Ishteyaque Amjad** Past President, PAFI and Co-Chair, PAFI Annual Forum Managing Director, Policy & Government Affairs India and South Asia Abbott
Panellists	**K. Srinivas** Secretary Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region Government of India
	Rajesh Kumar Singh Secretary, Department of Defence Secretary DDR&D and Chairman DRDO Ministry of Defence Government of India
	S. Krishnan Secretary Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology Government of India
	Rajit Punhani Chief Executive Officer Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)
	Bhuvnesh Kumar Secretary Ministry of Tourism Government of India
Closing remarks	**Vasudevan Rangarajan** Managing Director - Public and Government Affairs Edelman

1400 – 1530 | Parallel Session | **PAFI@Varq Session V- 23** *(Panel discussion)*

Delhi 3.0: Reimagining India's Capital Region

Delhi has long been the stage on which India's defining chapters are imagined, debated and shaped. However, the capital today extends well beyond its historical boundaries. The wider National Capital Region (NCR) has emerged as one of the country's most critical centres for government, enterprise, investment, talent and culture. With the Master Plan for Delhi 2047 now notified, the pressing question is how this region should evolve over the next two decades, and what concrete actions are required in the immediate term to set that transformation in motion.

Produced in collaboration with ULI India, this session brings together leaders from government, real estate investment, urban development, design and the cultural sector to examine the NCR as one interconnected, resilient ecosystem. The dialogue will explore how infrastructure, mobility, environmental sustainability, public spaces and communities can integrate to create a capital region that is globally competitive, highly liveable and universally welcoming. Ultimately, the discussion seeks to distil a 'Delhi 3.0 Agenda', identifying five core priorities for the next five years to offer a practical set of ideas that will shape the future of India's capital.

- How can the newly notified Master Plan for Delhi 2047 be effectively implemented in its first five years to catalyse the region's transformation into a globally competitive ecosystem?
- What collaborative frameworks are necessary between state authorities, private investment and urban planners to seamlessly integrate infrastructure, mobility and public spaces across the entire NCR?
- What specific initiatives must define the 'Delhi 3.0 Agenda' to ensure the capital region remains a thriving, sustainable and liveable centre for both enterprise and community?

Welcome and Moderator	**Anupam Yog** Managing Partner, XDG Labs Pte Ltd
Panellists	**Luis Miranda** Chairman of the Board & Co-Founder, Indian School of Public Policy
	Manisha Bhartia Business Director and Head, BDP India
	Nipun Sahni Chair - National Capital Region, Urban Land Institute
	Sahil Vachani Managing Director and CEO, Max Estates Limited
	Vivek Narain Designated Partner, Quorum Club

In collaboration with: **Urban Land Institute (ULI)**

1500 – 1600 | **Session 24— India and United States** *(Panel discussion)*

Shared Values, Evolving Dynamics: The Future of India–US Cooperation

The India–US relationship has evolved into one of the world's most important strategic partnerships, anchored in shared democratic values, economic opportunity and a common vision for a free, open and prosperous Indo-Pacific. As both countries navigate an increasingly fragmented global landscape, the relationship is entering a new phase—one that must reconcile strategic convergence with evolving trade, technology and industrial policy priorities.

Recent progress towards a bilateral trade agreement offers an opportunity to deepen economic engagement and unlock the next phase of growth. At the same time, emerging technologies, trusted supply chains, energy security, defence cooperation and resilient investment frameworks are reshaping the contours of the partnership. The challenge now is to move beyond managing differences towards building a future-ready partnership that strengthens competitiveness, drives innovation and creates shared prosperity. This session will bring together senior policymakers, business leaders and strategic thinkers to examine how India and the United States can translate political goodwill into enduring economic and strategic outcomes. It will explore the policy choices, institutional partnerships and business collaborations needed to make the next decade the defining chapter of the India–US relationship.

- How can India and the United States accelerate trade, investment and market access while addressing emerging policy and regulatory challenges?
- What opportunities exist to deepen collaboration in critical and emerging technologies, AI, semiconductors, defence, energy and resilient supply chains?
- How can governments and industry work together to strengthen innovation, competitiveness and trusted economic partnerships in an increasingly uncertain global environment?

Welcome	**Saurabh Singh** Country Leader - Public Policy and Government Affairs Optum India
Moderator	**Rahul Sharma** Founding Member & Past President, PAFI Managing Director US India Business Council (USIBC)
Panellists	**Arun Singh** Former Indian Ambassador to US, France and Israel
	Manish Tewari Member of Parliament Lok Sabha
	Vijay Chauthaiwale In-charge, Department of Foreign Affairs Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)
	Vrinda Kapoor Co-founder & CEO Bharat Semi
Closing remarks	**Sandeep Aurora** Secretary, PAFI Group Director & Head - Public Policy & Government Affairs Microsoft India & South Asia

1600 – 1645 | **Session 25—Closing Conversation**

India at an Inflection Point: Building Strength for the Next Decade

This Closing conversation will outline the Prime Minister's vision for Viksit Bharat and the strategic policy priorities guiding the next phase of India's economic growth. India's journey toward India 3.0 is backed by strong momentum, with real GDP estimated to grow at 7.4% in FY26. To sustain this trajectory, the government is focusing on expanding the domestic market. With private consumption projected to reach 61.5% of GDP—the highest level since FY12—the priority is to formalise the broader economy, reduce barriers to consumption and unlock purchasing power beyond major metropolitan centres.

At the same time, sustaining this rapid expansion requires long-term structural resilience. Central to the Prime Minister's agenda is securing India's energy future—accelerating the transition to clean energy, advancing domestic manufacturing in electric mobility, and reducing reliance on imported fuels. This session examines the critical policy levers guiding this dual transformation, exploring how domestic market expansion and sustainable industrial policy work together to anchor India's position as a reliable global growth partner.

- What policy levers are being prioritised to expand the domestic market, formalise enterprise and unlock purchasing power beyond Tier-1 cities?
- How is the government aligning industrial policy and infrastructure investment to accelerate the clean energy transition and support domestic manufacturing?
- What collaborative steps between the state and industry are critical to secure energy independence while keeping India's high-growth economy resilient against global disruptions?

Welcome	**Shivnath Thukral** President, PAFI Vice President of Public Policy and Government Affairs PhonePe Limited
Moderator	**Arijit Sen** President Vivo Mobile India Private Limited
Chief Guest	**Tarun Kapoor** Advisor to the Prime Minister of India
Closing remarks	**Ajay Khanna** Founder, PAFI Chairman Emeritus, PAFI Annual Forum

1645 – 1730 | **Networking reception**

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