

Ajay Khanna, Founder, Public Affairs Forum of India (PAFI) and Co-Editor of *The Policy Pivot: Inside India's Strategic Shift*

Ajay Khanna is a pioneering figure in public policy, public affairs, and advocacy in India, with over four decades of leadership at the intersection of government, business, and civil society. His work has been shaped by one enduring conviction: that dialogue, trust, and collaboration are the most powerful instruments for driving meaningful and lasting change.

A graduate of Shri Ram College of Commerce and the Faculty of Law, University of Delhi, Ajay serves on multiple advisory councils, boards, and foundations. Across these roles, he is guided by a consistent mission—to contribute to an India that is inclusive, globally competitive, and anchored in the values of trust, dialogue, and collaboration.

As Founder of the Public Affairs Forum of India (PAFI), established in 2008, Ajay has made his most defining institutional contribution. Under his leadership, PAFI has evolved into one of India's most respected and distinctive platforms for public policy and public affairs professionals. Its Annual Forum—widely regarded as the country's leading non-partisan policy platform—brings together leaders from government, industry, civil society, and academia to deliberate on issues central to India's growth and governance. As Chairman Emeritus of the Annual Forum, he continues to shape its vision and guiding philosophy: that open dialogue and trust are indispensable to national progress.

Alongside institution building, Ajay has established himself as an author and thought leader. He co-edited *The Policy Pivot: Inside India's Strategic Shift*, the first book published by PAFI, which examines India's evolving role in a rapidly changing global order. He writes regularly for leading publications on geopolitics, public affairs, public policy, and governance. His work brings together decades of institutional experience with forward-looking insight, with the aim of provoking dialogue and shaping new thinking on issues critical to India's future.

Ajay's professional engagements today span a wide range of influential roles. He serves as Group Strategic Advisor and Ombudsperson at the Jubilant Bhartia Group, and as Professor of Practice at the Indian School of Public Policy, where he mentors the next generation of policy leaders. He is associated with organisations at the forefront of policy, innovation, and social change, including The Convergence Foundation, Urban Land Institute (India), Internet and Mobile Association of India, Catalyst 2030, and Teamwork Arts.

He contributes to the boards of Aakash Educational Services Limited, SaveLife Foundation, and Pahle India Foundation. He is also a Trustee of the India Development Foundation and serves as an Expert Member of the Digital Publisher Content Grievances Council.

Ajay Khanna's engagement extends to the global stage. For over three decades, he has been a regular participant at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, contributing to conversations on competitiveness, sustainability, and social innovation. He also pioneered the Social Entrepreneur of the Year Award – India, a platform that recognises leaders who combine enterprise with purpose to drive transformative social impact. He is a member of the Global Alliance for Social Entrepreneurship of WEF.

Earlier in his career, Ajay played a significant role in building institutions that continue to shape India's global engagement. At the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), where he spent nearly three decades and rose to the position of Deputy Director General, he was closely involved in fostering constructive engagement between policymakers and industry during India's liberalisation years. He later served as the Founding CEO of the India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF), where he led India's global branding initiatives, including the landmark "India Everywhere" campaign at Davos in 2006. Subsequently, as a Partner at Accenture India, he advised corporations and governments on reform, competitiveness, and innovation.

For Ajay Khanna, strategy is not merely about intent—it is about execution, integrity, and long-term vision. Across institutions, boardrooms, and policy platforms, he has remained guided by a singular belief: that dialogue is the most powerful currency of change.