

# Ambassador Ajay Bisaria

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New Delhi, India.



Mr Ajay Bisaria is a corporate strategic advisor, commentator and author. A former civil servant, he now runs an advisory firm giving strategic guidance to global businesses on navigating geopolitics and governments, dealing with risks and regulations. He is an advisor for India for OMERS, a Canadian pension fund. He also advises a clutch of other global companies, including a few private equity and venture capital firms, a global mobility company, a fintech startup, and a healthtech startup. He is an independent director with a global company working on biodegradable materials. He is a Distinguished Fellow at the Observer Research Foundation and chairs a Ministry of Steel task force studying the global experience in green steel. He also serves on the advisory council of the Princeton Foundation for Peace and Learning.

At the Observer Research Foundation, he focuses on economic diplomacy and regionally, on South Asia, Europe and North America. He has published and lectured on issues related to trade, finance, and geopolitics. He writes extensively on geopolitics, including in op-ed columns in Indian newspapers. His first book, *Anger Management*, on the troubled diplomatic relationship between India and Pakistan, was released in January 2024, to critical and popular acclaim.

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## INDIAN FOREIGN SERVICE

He has had a distinguished diplomatic career spanning 35 years as a member of the Indian Foreign Service (1987 batch), where he dealt with some of India's key economic and security relationships. He served as Indian High Commissioner to Canada (2020-2022) and Pakistan (2017-2020). He was earlier India's ambassador to Poland and Lithuania (2015-2017). He has also represented the country at the World Bank in Washington DC and in embassies in Berlin and Moscow. He has served in various capacities in the Ministry of External Affairs, Department of Commerce and the Prime Minister's Office, where he was a key aide to Prime Minister Vajpayee from 1999 to 2004. He has dealt extensively with India's Eurasia policy, including with Russia, Ukraine, and Central Asia.

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## CANADA

From March 2020 to June 2022, Mr. Bisaria served as High Commissioner to Canada. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he facilitated the repatriation of Indian nationals under the Vande Bharat scheme 'air bubble' and led India's 'Vaccine Maitri' program which created greater trust and friendship in India's strategic ties with Canada. Through his tenure, Mr. Bisaria worked on the India-Canada economic corridor, advocated stronger economic ties between G-20 economies, and helped strengthen Canadian portfolio investment in India, which stands at over US\$ 70 billion and is rising rapidly.

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## PAKISTAN

From December 2017 to February 2020, Mr. Bisaria served as India's High Commissioner to Pakistan. During this tenure, Mr Bisaria helped India establish a relationship with the newly elected Prime Minister Imran Khan, worked on efforts to expand Indian nationals' access to the Kartarpur Corridor, and represented India at the United Nations Human Rights Council, Geneva to speak of India's human rights record in the wake of the change of the constitutional status of Jammu & Kashmir. His book 'Anger Management' captures the sweep of 76 years of Indo-Pak diplomacy.

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## POLAND AND LITHUANIA

Prior to that, Mr Bisaria was India's Ambassador to Poland in with concurrent accreditation to Lithuania from 2015- 2017. During his time in Poland, he focused on forging economic partnerships and deepening India's cultural footprint in Central and Eastern Europe. He also served as India's representative in the Warsaw-based Community of Democracies, representing India in the meetings in Warsaw, Geneva and New York.

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## **EURASIA**

Between 2009-2014, Mr. Bisaria served as Joint Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs where he coordinated India's foreign policy and bilateral relations with the Eurasia region that led the development of the India-Russia 'special and privileged strategic partnership'. He coordinated India's approach to six annual Indo-Russian summits, including the first annual summit between Prime Minister Modi and President Putin in India in December 2014.

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## **WORLD BANK**

From 2004-2008, Mr Bisaria was posted at the World Bank in Washington D.C. as an Advisor to the executive director for South Asia, where he worked on development projects and aid issues, contributing to corporate governance and India's multilateral economic diplomacy.

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## **PMO**

From 1999-2004, Mr Bisaria was Private Secretary and Advisor to the Prime Minister of India, Mr Atal Bihari Vajpayee. During this period, he advised Mr Vajpayee on various economic, defence, and foreign policy initiatives and attended more than 50 international summits with the Prime Minister as part of his delegation.

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## **ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY**

From 1995-1999, Mr Bisaria was posted as First Secretary in the Indian Embassy in Berlin where he facilitated commercial relations at a time of rising economic engagement between a unifying Germany and a liberalizing India. Prior to that, he served in the Ministry of Commerce (1992-95), in the era of economic liberalization contributing to a new trade policy paradigm managing complex transition of India's trade arrangements from a rupee-based to a hard currency regime. Before that he served as Under Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs on the East Europe (1991 - 92) when India was engaged in building new relationships with the post-Soviet countries, and at the Indian Embassy in Moscow (1988 - 1991) where he was attached to the economic and political wings of the Embassy. He worked as a Soviet internal affairs specialist in the months leading up to the dissolution of the USSR.

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## **EDUCATION**

Mr Bisaria has a bachelor's degree in economics from St Stephen's College, Delhi University, an MBA (Finance and Marketing) from IIM Calcutta and a master's degree in public policy from Princeton University. He has received distinguished alumnus awards from Modern School, New Delhi and IIM Calcutta. He knows Russian, German, and Urdu, apart from Hindi and English.

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