

# A legacy of leadership

Chairman and MD Rajesh Sharma's 50 years of leadership at Ion Exchange, along with a commitment to innovation, has transformed the company into a global powerhouse

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**W**ater treatment pioneer Ion Exchange (India) Ltd celebrates a legacy that spans over six decades. At the heart of this success is Rajesh Sharma, the company's chairman and managing director, whose leadership has transformed the company into a formidable global competitor.

With a career spanning 50 years with Ion Exchange, Sharma's contributions to the company and the broader water and environmental sectors are exceptional. Since assuming the role of CMD in 2011, he has been instrumental in driving innovation and growth.

## Key figure

Reflecting on his journey, Sharma said, "Joining Ion Exchange in 1974 as a service engineer became a pivotal moment in my career. Early on, I understood the significance of addressing customer needs by delivering timely, quality services—even at short notice and outside of regular business hours. The opportunity to provide Total Water and Environment Management Services to industries, institutions, homes and communities, along with the challenges that these sectors present, driving development of innovative products, solutions and services help keep me motivated."

He added, "I am deeply grateful to the leaders who entrusted me with significant responsibilities over the years. I would also like to acknowledge the support from peers, subordinates, colleagues and business associates in the quest to provide Total Water and Environment Management Services to our customers in the global market."

Sharma has been a key figure in driving the company's sustainability initiatives.

Ion Exchange is well on its way to becoming water positive and achieving net zero carbon neutrality by 2030. "While the government may introduce various sustainability initiatives, corporate India has an even greater responsibility in this effort," said Sharma. "We



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must prioritise conservation of the environment for future generations."

Sharma also serves as the chairman of the CII National Committee on Water (NCW). He leads the policy advocacy and capacity building work of CII while leading the sector's initiatives for creating a sustainable and water-secured future.

## Better future

Encouraging young professionals to build a career in the water industry, Sharma said, "The opportunities for the water industry are truly enormous. The changes in the outside world are opening up wide vistas in the sector, providing ample opportunity for sustained growth. Focus on building long-term relationships with customers, based on trust."

A strong advocate of the philosophy

'think global, act local', Sharma has firmly established Ion Exchange as a reliable partner in South East Asia, Africa, Japan, Europe, the USA and the Middle East.

"Companies once inadvertently believed that foreign products and services were superior. We transformed this mindset by investing in R&D, driving innovation and establishing world-class facilities, placing us on the global stage for exceptional quality and reliability," he added.

The establishment of the R&D Centre at Patancheru, Telangana, and a state-of-the-art Centre of Membrane Excellence in Goa are testament to his leadership. Additionally, under his guidance, the company established the Ion Foundation in 2010 as its CSR wing, focusing on education, health, hygiene and environmental initiatives.

For five decades, Sharma has been a cornerstone of Ion Exchange, exemplifying dedication and visionary leadership. His journey, marked by an unwavering commitment and pioneering spirit, has not only steered the company through transformative innovations, but also played a crucial role in shaping its legacy.

Sharma's impact is reflected in the groundbreaking solutions and sustainable practices that have become hallmarks of Ion Exchange.