



UAE-INDIA  
CEPA COUNCIL

# ANNUAL REPORT

2024



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# Message

from the UAE Ambassador to India



**H.E. Abdunasser Alshaali, PhD**

The UAE Ambassador to India

As we approach the third anniversary of the implementation of the UAE-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), both nations continue to set a compelling example of how open collaboration and mutual trust can thrive, even in a world increasingly shaped by inward-looking policies.

The CEPA has ushered in a period of remarkable growth in the UAE-India bilateral partnership, underscored by shared values of cooperation, economic integration, and cultural exchange. The agreement's impact on trade has been transformative for both countries. Through the CEPA, the UAE has eliminated duties on 97 percent of its tariff lines in the goods sector, covering 99 percent of imports from India. This landmark decision has spurred significant growth, particularly in key sectors such as minerals, fuels, automobiles, and gems and jewellery.

Significantly, since the implementation of the CEPA, total trade between the UAE and India has increased by 14.76 per cent, with UAE imports to India expanding by 7.09 per cent, and Indian exports to the UAE rising by 27.03 per cent. Total trade between India and the UAE, which stood at a modest USD 180 million annually in the 1970's, has grown exponentially to USD 83.64 billion in FY 2023–24. This remarkable growth has positioned the UAE as India's third-largest trading partner, following the United States and China. Furthermore, the UAE has become India's second-largest export destination, reflecting the deep economic ties and shared vision that exists between the two nations.

Beyond enhancing trade, the CEPA has deepened the strategic dimension of this unique partnership, aligning with the UAE and India's shared vision for an integrated approach that extends beyond economics. In the fight against climate change, our bilateral partnership has been pivotal in promoting global renewable energy solutions. Together, we have made significant strides in developing green hydrogen technologies and deploying advanced solar and wind energy solutions.

Similarly, food security has emerged as a key area of bilateral focus. Major initiatives, such as the UAE's commitment to invest over USD 2 billion in integrated food parks across India and the USD 7 billion UAE-India Food Security Corridor, will drive the adoption of advanced agri-tech solutions aimed at strengthening regional and global food supply chains.

These partnerships underscore the CEPA's potential to drive inclusive economic growth and shape a future of shared prosperity, innovation, and enduring friendship.

It is in this context of these key bilateral developments that the UAE-India CEPA Council (UICC) has become a critical platform for deepening economic ties and advancing our shared goals in diverse sectors. It has created a platform for effective dialogue and the identification of new growth opportunities, offering unparalleled benefits to businesses in both the UAE and India.

Looking ahead, the UAE Government remains firmly committed to supporting the UICC's initiatives, recognising this platform's vital role in strengthening bilateral trade and investment. The UICC is a key driver of economic cooperation, and I look forward to witnessing the organisations's continued success in maximising the CEPA's long-term benefits.

# Message

from the Director



**Ahmed Aljneibi**

Director, UAE-India CEPA Council

Inaugurated in January 2024 on the sidelines of the Vibrant Gujarat Summit, the UAE-India CEPA Council (UICC) has been instrumental in advancing the shared economic vision of the UAE and India, and strengthening our bilateral ties under the CEPA. This has been a year of progress, innovation, and collaboration.

Throughout 2024 and early 2025, the UICC has organised a series of business roundtables, with a key focus on Tier-2 and Tier-3 Indian cities. Each of these meetings has facilitated dialogue across a range of diverse industries such as agriculture, manufacturing, renewable energy, and finance.

Over the course of this short but fulfilling period of interaction, we have engaged directly with over 300 companies in the UAE and India. In the process we have facilitated the market entry of numerous Indian companies seeking to enter the UAE market, responded to hundreds of enquiries relating to trade and investment matters, and consistently engaged in a range of highly valuable discussions with businesses of all sizes.

Aside from the dedicated business roundtables, this year in May we celebrated the second anniversary of the CEPA in Mumbai. Hosted by H.E. Abdulnasser Alshaali Ph.D., the UAE Ambassador to India, the event

was attended by eminent dignitaries from a number of key strategic sectors, underscoring the critical role Indian businesses play in shaping the UAE-India bilateral partnership.

Further momentum was added to the UICC's activities with the September 2024 visit to India of H.H. Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi. This was followed by the Founders Retreat in December 2024, held in the UAE, where more than 60 of India's most prominent start-up founders convened alongside key UAE business leaders, investors, and policymakers. This event was pivotal in demonstrating the UICC's role in advancing cooperation in the start-up and emerging technology sectors.

Our collaborations this year included the signing of landmark Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with the Indian Chamber of Commerce, the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Ras Al Khaimah Economic Zone (RAKEZ). These MoUs have paved the way for the harnessing of bilateral trade and investment opportunities, and improves access to markets for businesses in both nations.

In the background of these efforts, trade between the UAE and India continues to thrive. In FY 2023-24, bilateral trade in goods reached USD 83.64 billion, up from USD 72.88 billion in FY 2021-22, underscoring the CEPA's impact in reducing trade barriers and facilitating growth. It is pleasing to note that India's non-oil trade with the UAE registered an increase of about 20.1 percent, rising from USD 49.73 billion in FY 2022-23 to USD 59.72 billion in FY 2023-24. Investments from India to the UAE also saw a remarkable increase, with over USD 1.16 billion directed towards diverse industries ranging from technology to logistics. While in 2023, the UAE emerged as India's fourth largest foreign investor, with USD 3.35 billion committed to supporting high potential sectors across the country.

As we look ahead to 2025, the UICC remains committed to assisting UAE and Indian businesses navigate challenges and unlock the full potential of CEPA. Plans are already underway to expand our roundtable series, strengthen cross-industry connections, and drive deeper collaboration in emerging and cutting-edge sectors. Our mission is to ensure that the UAE-India partnership continues to set new benchmarks in global trade and economic cooperation.

2024 was a year of remarkable achievement. The success of the UICC would not have been possible without the unwavering support of the UAE and Indian Governments, our corporate and industry partners, and the hundreds of businesses we have engaged with. 2025 promises to be even more transformative, as we build on this momentum to further solidify the UAE-India economic, trade, and investment partnership.



About the UAE-India CEPA Council (UICC)

# Background and Objectives



The UAE-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), which came into effect on 1 May 2022, marks a significant milestone in the economic partnership between the two nations. Signed in the presence of H.H. Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, and Shri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, the agreement fosters trade, investment, and strategic collaboration by reducing tariffs, easing trade barriers, and enhancing market access across key sectors such as finance, healthcare, and technology.



Building on this momentum, the UICC was launched on 10 January 2024, during the Vibrant Gujarat Summit. Inaugurated by H.E. Thani Al Zeyoudi, UAE Minister of State for Foreign Trade, and Shri Piyush Goyal, India's Hon'ble Minister of Commerce and Industry, the UICC serves as a platform to maximise the benefits of CEPA and strengthen economic ties between the two nations.

At its core, the UICC aims to expand the opportunities created through the CEPA, providing a dynamic new outlet for the business communities of both countries to deepen their already significant and constructive commercial ties in a tangible and collaborative fashion.

### The UICC focuses on three key objectives

1. To encourage inclusive and diverse partnerships across all levels of the two countries' business communities, with a strong emphasis on critical spheres such as start-ups, women's entrepreneurship, micro-, small-, and medium-sized entrepreneurs (MSMEs), and the services sector.
2. To facilitate a range of events that bring the two countries' business communities together in a manner that supports trust, dialogue, and open engagement.
3. To provide the UAE and Indian business communities with the tangible resources and support they need to truly succeed, and fully unlock the benefits and opportunities of the CEPA.

Through these efforts, the UICC aims to drive meaningful economic impact, ensuring that businesses in both the UAE and India fully capitalise on the opportunities created by the CEPA.



The UICC in Numbers

# Key Achievements



# UAE-India CEPA Council Year in Review

Business Roundtables  
Hosted in India:

 8

Companies interacted  
with:

 300+

Business Challenges  
Addressed:

 66

## Signed Three MoUs



Ras Al Khaimah  
Economic Zone (RAKEZ)

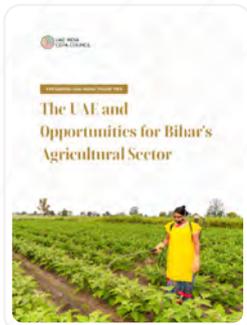


Abu Dhabi Chamber of  
Commerce and Industry



Indian Chamber of  
Commerce

## Published Seven Sectoral Reports



The UAE and Opportunities  
for Bihar's Agricultural Sector



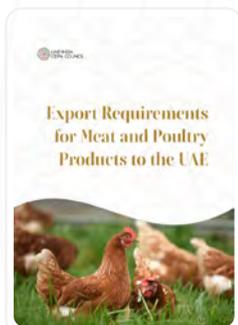
The Electric Vehicles  
Sector in the UAE



Investment Opportunities in  
India's Agriculture



UAE Special Economic  
Zones (SEZs) Investor Guide



Export Requirements for Meat and  
Poultry Products to the UAE



The UAE's AI, Robotics and  
Automation Industries



The UAE Tourism Sector:  
Opportunities for Indian  
Investment



# Business Roundtables

Throughout 2024, the UICC organised business roundtables across India to actively engage with local businesses and raise awareness about the CEPA. The goal was to ensure that businesses across the country were well-informed about this historic agreement and fully understood its advantages and opportunities. Additionally, these roundtables served as a platform to highlight how businesses from different regions of India could benefit from increasing their investment and trade interactions with UAE counterparts.





# UAE-India CEPA Council Business Roundtable Chennai

On 28 February 2024, the UICC organised its inaugural business roundtable in Chennai in collaboration with the Confederation of India Industry (CII).

The roundtable hosted several Chennai-based exporters from sectors such as logistics, manufacturing, food and beverages, agri-commerce, pharma and healthcare, infrastructure development, and green mobility.



The inaugural address of the session was delivered by Mr. TT Ashok, Member - CII National Council and Past Chairman, CII Southern Region, and Managing Director, Taylor Rubber. Mr. Ashok noted the growing strategic ties between the UAE and India, highlighting the huge potential the two markets hold for each other. The session was moderated by Mr Prasanna Rajagopalan, Co-Chairman, Global Linkages Sub Committee, CII Southern Region.



The keynote address of the event was delivered by Mr. Ahmed Aljneibi, Director of UICC, who provided an overview on the benefits of the CEPA as well the functions of the UICC.

This was followed by expert sessions conducted by representatives from the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry and DP World. Mr. Sameer Nawani, Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Chief Representative in India, emphasised the role Dubai Chambers could play in supporting Indian firms looking to expand their operations to the UAE.

Col. Shubhransh Srivastav, Vice President of Corporate Affairs Subcontinent, DP World, provided participants with an overview of the recently launched Bharat Mart initiative. Col. Srivastav underlined Bharat Mart's potential to serve as an access point for Indian businesses to wider regional and international markets.

The event concluded with an interactive session. Participating exporters addressed some of the challenges and potential opportunities for expansion in the UAE market, including:

- ▶ HSN code discrepancies in general manufacturing.
- ▶ Cold storage and blast freezing facilities in Bharat Mart for food processing.
- ▶ Food security partnerships with the UAE Government for strategic exports.
- ▶ Support for service-based businesses in medical devices.
- ▶ Green mobility projects in the UAE for electric vehicles and buses.
- ▶ Structured programs for start-ups to interact with established players and expand their foothold in the UAE.
- ▶ Joint ventures for start-ups with UAE partners.
- ▶ Sustainable development initiatives in connection with DP World.

The inaugural roundtable in Chennai proved to be insightful, with the UICC gaining a clear overview of the on-ground situation of exporters and the kind of support they required from the Council.





# UAE-India CEPA Council Business Roundtable Jaipur

On 24 April 2024, the UICC organised a business roundtable in Jaipur, in collaboration with the Confederation of India Industry (CII).

Participants of the roundtable consisted of Jaipur-based exporters from a diverse range of industries, including chemicals, software, renewable energy, and finance, among others.



The focus of the event was to highlight the many opportunities that exist for businesses post the implementation of the CEPA, with a special focus on the potential for Indian businesses to invest in the Emirate of Ras Al Khaimah (RAK), from where the UICC had invited expert guest speakers to participate online and in-person.

Mr. Namit Agarwal, Convenor of the CII Rajasthan Panel on MSMEs and Policy Advocacy, opened and moderated the event. In his address, Mr. Agarwal highlighted how the CEPA has been instrumental in unlocking vast opportunities for Indian businesses in not only accessing the UAE market, but also in strengthening their global reach.

Various speaker presentations drew attention to the diverse opportunities available in RAK. Mr. Txomin Goitia, Director of International Relations at the Office of the Ruler, Government of RAK, provided the audience with a broad overview of RAK, highlighting its various economic and demographic indicators. He noted that out of a total population of 450,000, RAK is home to 130,000 Indian nationals and 5,300 Indian companies. He further highlighted the various advantages of doing business in RAK, with a focus on cost-effectiveness and economic stability.



Mr. Mohammad Haseeb, Strategic Country Manager India, Ras Al Khaimah Economic Zone (RAKEZ) provided participants with a thorough overview of the various incentives and advantages they will receive by establishing their businesses in RAK. He noted that the costs of setting up a business in RAK is on average 40 percent lower than other emirates, due to cheaper land and a range of measures implemented to enhance the ease of doing business.

Mr. Bhoutik Vyas, Head of Corporate Strategy and Investor Relations at RAK Ceramics, outlined the journey of the company, noting how it first began operations in 1991, and is today the fourth-largest ceramics manufacturer in the world. He stated that the company expanded its presence to India in 2006, and was the first to export double charged tiles to the country.

Mr. Peter CS Pan, Head of the Ras Al Khaimah Start-up and Entrepreneurship Hub, provided the audience with a broad outline of the opportunities for the start-up sector in Ras Al Khaimah. He noted that the Government of RAK aims to nurture start-ups in the manufacturing, trading, transportation and storage, tourism, construction, real estate, and public administration sectors. He highlighted that a dedicated government start-up agency will soon be established in RAK, which will offer ecosystem enablers and various facilities to support start-ups in the emirate.

The final expert speaker of the event, Mr. Georgios Karaiskos, Strategy and Business Development Officer of Ras Al Khaimah's Al Marjan Island, briefed the audience on the upcoming opportunities in the real estate sector of RAK. Focussing on the Wynn Al Marjan Island, a multibillion-dollar integrated resort due to be developed in the emirate by early 2027, he highlighted the enormous impact the project will provide tourism and real estate operators.

Following the speaker presentations, an interactive session was held on how the UICC can assist local businesses with any issues faced in expanding to the UAE, as well as any other broader queries they had regarding export and investment opportunities in the country.

Apart from technical questions on specific aspects relating to setting up businesses in the UAE, participants outlined a number of potential challenges and opportunities they wished to gain support upon, namely:

- ▶ Expanding tangible collaboration with the UAE's technology sector.
- ▶ Understanding processes required to setup subsidiaries in the UAE.
- ▶ Increasing links between health-care start-ups in India and the UAE.
- ▶ Issues relating to UAE labour laws and work force supply.
- ▶ Environmental policies and impact on the establishment of various manufacturing enterprises.
- ▶ Mining policies.
- ▶ Potential avenues to develop agricultural projects in the UAE.

The Jaipur roundtable emerged as an important platform to connect directly with Indian businesses that often do not have the ability to access UAE counterparts. Furthermore, the presence of stakeholders from RAK was a great success, with significant interest from participants in establishing their businesses in the emirate.



# UAE-India CEPA Council Business Roundtable Kolkata

On 9 May 2024, the UAE Embassy in India hosted an interactive session in collaboration with the UICC and the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) in Kolkata, West Bengal.



The event, which was headed by H.E. Abdunnasser Alshaali Ph.D., the UAE Ambassador to India, brought together prominent business leaders from diverse sectors, including power, healthcare, finance, and education.

The session marked the Ambassador's first official visit to West Bengal, and aimed to explore avenues for enhanced bilateral cooperation between the UAE and the state. The event also witnessed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Mr. Ahmed Aljneibi, Director of the UICC, and Dr. Rajeev Singh, Director General of the ICC, symbolising a commitment to deepen cooperation between the UAE and the West Bengal business community.

The session commenced with a welcome address by Mr. Rudra Chatterjee, Managing Director of Makaibari Tea and Obeetee Carpets, and Past President of the ICC. In his remarks, Mr. Chatterjee noted that the world can learn from the UAE's success in fostering a business-friendly environment. He highlighted the long-standing diplomatic ties between the two nations, with millions of Indians contributing to the UAE's workforce, and complimented the nation on its ability to create a harmonious society where diverse cultures co-exist peacefully.

Following Mr. Chatterjee's remarks, Ambassador Alshaali expressed his delight in visiting West Bengal, highlighting the warm hospitality he



receives throughout India. He emphasised the UAE's significance for Indian businesses. Citing the country's open markets, easy logistics, and numerous trade agreements, the Ambassador explained how the UAE can act as a gateway for Indian businesses to seamlessly enter global markets.

Following formal remarks, an interactive session was held for event participants to raise queries in respect to the UAE's business environment.

Apart from technical questions on specific aspects relating to setting up businesses in the UAE, participants outlined a number of potential challenges and opportunities they wished to gain support upon, namely:

- ▶ Understanding the UAE's corporate taxation policies.
- ▶ Collaboration opportunities in the higher education sector.
- ▶ Understanding the processes to open subsidiaries in the healthcare sector.
- ▶ Collaboration opportunities in the sports-education sector.
- ▶ Start-up policies in the UAE.
- ▶ Collaboration opportunities in agricultural research.
- ▶ Understanding insurance licensing policies.

The Kolkata roundtable served as an instrumental platform to enhance the Council's outreach efforts in eastern India, given West Bengal's importance within the UAE-India bilateral partnership.





## UAE-India CEPA Council Business Roundtable **Patna**

On 22 May 2024, the UICC organised a roundtable in collaboration with the Bihar Industries Association (BIA) in Patna.

The objective of the roundtable was to discuss the various opportunities available for Bihar-based enterprises, particularly in the agriculture and food processing sectors. Over 50 company representatives were in attendance at the roundtable, with participants ranging from established companies to start-ups.



Mr. Krishna Prakashsingh Keshri, President of the BIA and Director of Amrapali Foods, inaugurated and moderated the event. He emphasised Bihar's agricultural prowess, highlighting its significant contribution to national production. Given Bihar's agricultural strengths, Mr. Keshri encouraged the possibility of increasing the state's exports to the UAE market.

Mr. Ahmed Aljneibi, Director of the UICC, provided the audience with a high-level overview of the report "The UAE and Opportunities for Bihar's Agricultural Sector", which was launched at the roundtable. Mr. Aljneibi noted that the UAE is the second-largest export destination for India's processed food sector, and an important market for Bihar's agricultural products. He further explained that post the CEPA, nearly all of Bihar's competitive agricultural products now have zero-tariff entry into the UAE. Additionally, Mr. Aljneibi provided a thorough overview into the many lucrative opportunities that are available for Indian agricultural exporters in the UAE, including initiatives like Bharat Mart and the Abu Dhabi Food Hub.

Following the conclusion of formal remarks and presentations, an interactive session was held on how the UICC can assist local businesses with any issues faced by them in expanding to the UAE, as well as any other broader queries they had regarding export and investment opportunities in the country.

Apart from technical questions on certification requirements for exporting various products to the UAE, participants outlined a number of potential challenges and opportunities they wished to gain support upon, namely:

- ▶ Incentives and investments available for the start-up sector.
- ▶ Setting up logistic hub facilities in Bihar along with a dedicated freight corridor directly between the state and the UAE.
- ▶ Understanding food safety parameters and standards for the export of spices to the UAE.
- ▶ Joint research opportunities available between the UAE and India in the field of agriculture.
- ▶ Setting up of a trade facilitation platform, which could connect buyers and sellers in both the countries.



The Patna roundtable was impactful in targeting local businesses in Bihar, who typically have limited direct business or government exposure to the UAE. A notable achievement of the event was the significant participation of small household entrepreneurs, particularly women.





# UAE-India CEPA Council Business Roundtable **Bhubaneswar**

On 26 June 2024, the UICC organised a business roundtable in Bhubaneswar, in collaboration with the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC).

The event, which was headed by H.E. Abdunasser Alshaali Ph.D., the UAE Ambassador to India, brought together prominent Bhubaneswar-based exporters from a diverse range of industries, including healthcare, real estate, automotives, education, steel, and agriculture.



The focus of the event was to highlight the many opportunities that exist for businesses following the implementation of the CEPA. During the event, expert sessions were conducted on opportunities under the CEPA for Indian exporters, with invited guest speakers from Ras Al Khaimah Economic Zone (RAKEZ) and DP World also participating.

The roundtable commenced with a welcome address by Mr. J.B. Pany, Chairman of the ICC Odisha State Council. In his address, Mr. Pany emphasised the event's goal to foster economic growth through dialogue, cooperation, and exploring new business avenues. He expressed confidence in the platform's ability to build valuable connections and highlighted the opportunities for Odisha's industries to benefit from the CEPA and the broader UAE-India partnership.



Ambassador Alshaali provided special remarks to roundtable participants, sharing insights into areas in which businesses can benefit from the constructive UAE-India partnership.

During expert discussion sessions, Mr. Mohammad Haseeb, Strategic Country Manager for India at RAKEZ, highlighted the benefits of Ras Al Khaimah (RAK) as a cost-effective gateway to global markets, noting its strategic location, competitive costs, and supportive regulatory environment. He highlighted that following the implementation of CEPAs with India and other countries, RAKEZ has experienced significant growth in company registrations, which currently stands at nearly 1,000 new companies each month, showcasing the growing popularity of the emirate as a trading and investment hub. Stressing the importance of the UAE-India relationship, Mr. Haseeb mentioned that 30 percent of companies operating in RAK have Indian shareholders.

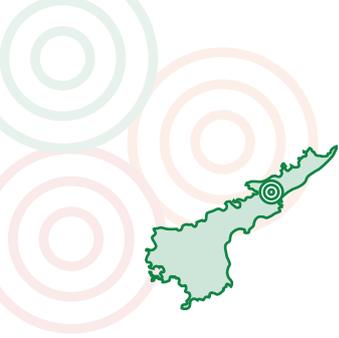
Mr. Yogpal Singh, Director of Corporate Affairs at DP World, gave a broad overview of the company, which is the largest multimodal logistics player in India. Highlighting the Bharat Mart initiative, Mr. Singh mentioned that the initiative is designed to provide Indian exporters access to Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), African, and other international markets, with benefits such as zero percent taxes, 100 percent foreign ownership, and other integrated offerings.

Following the speaker presentations, an interactive session was held on how the UICC can assist local businesses with any potential challenges faced in expanding their operations to the UAE, as well as in relation to other queries participants had in terms of export and investment opportunities in the country.

Apart from technical questions on specific aspects relating to setting up businesses in the UAE, participants outlined several potential challenges and opportunities they wished to gain support upon, namely:

- ▶ Expanding tangible collaboration in medical tourism sector.
- ▶ Understanding export opportunities for millets grown by Odisha's tribal farmers.
- ▶ Opportunities available for participating in agricultural events in the UAE.
- ▶ Incentives and support available for women entrepreneurs.
- ▶ Opportunities for exporting orchids from Odisha.
- ▶ Export opportunities for the tribal arts of Odisha.
- ▶ Easing barriers for mineral and metal trading between the UAE and India.
- ▶ Understanding the export opportunities of services from Odisha to the UAE.

The Bhubaneswar roundtable highlighted the importance the UAE places upon building close ties with the Odisha business community. Additionally, the involvement of private sector stakeholders from the UAE enriched the discussions offering participants numerous opportunities to explore avenues to enter or expand into the UAE market.



# UAE-India CEPA Council Business Roundtable

## Vijayawada

On 1 August 2024, the UAE Embassy and the UICC organised the UAE-Andhra Pradesh Economic and Investment Roundtable in Vijayawada, held in collaboration with the Andhra Pradesh Economic Development Board (APEDB).



The event was led by H.E. Abdulnasser Alshaali PhD, the UAE Ambassador to India, and Sri T.G. Bharath, Minister of Industries, Commerce, and Food Processing for the Government of Andhra Pradesh. The roundtable gathered prominent businesses and senior government officials from Andhra Pradesh and 11 representatives from UAE-based companies.

The event began with a welcome address by Dr. Sreedhar Cherukuri, IAS, Commissioner of Industries and Export Promotion for Andhra Pradesh. He emphasised the CEPA's potential to boost Andhra Pradesh's exports to the UAE while highlighting the state's strategic location, robust infrastructure, and pro-business policies.

Following this, Mr. Ahmed Aljneibi, Director of the UICC, delivered a presentation on the benefits of the CEPA between India and the UAE, specifically emphasising the advantages for the business community of Andhra Pradesh in doing business in the UAE. He highlighted the UAE's position as an international trading hub, citing its excellent infrastructure, competitive business location, and environment.



Mr. Ahmed Babu, IAS, Secretary of Horticulture, Aquaculture, and Fisheries for Andhra Pradesh, highlighted the state's leadership in horticulture and fisheries. Mr. Babu encouraged UAE companies to invest in areas such as deep-sea vessels, seafood processing technology, and aquaculture feed manufacturing, and outlined the various incentives offered by the Andhra Pradesh government such as capital investment subsidies, integrated aqua labs, and tax-related benefits for investors.

Mr. Prakash Katarapu, Associate Vice President of the APEDB, gave a presentation on Andhra Pradesh's macroeconomic indicators. He noted that with a GSDP of USD 157.4 billion, the state contributes 4.5 percent of India's exports, totalling USD 19.8 billion, and consistently ranks highly in ease of doing business rankings. Expanding on its infrastructure strengths, he noted that the state has three major industrial corridors and extensive land availability, facilitating immediate allocation for investments, and is also developing sector-specific industrial clusters across districts. Speaking on the CEPA, Mr. Katarapu mentioned that under the Agreement, Andhra Pradesh aims to leverage its strengths in sectors like renewable energy, green hydrogen, textiles, healthcare, pharma, and IT.

Following formal remarks, expert sessions on opportunities for expanded investment and economic engagement between the UAE and Andhra Pradesh were conducted. Mr. Aseem Goyal, Head of Business Development – India, Tabreed, provided an overview of the company, noting it operates 90 district cooling plants across six countries, including India. In India, Tabreed's projects include a significant concession for Hyderabad Pharma City and partnerships with private developers in Gurgaon and Plaksha University. Speaking in respect to Andhra Pradesh, Mr. Goyal highlighted that in 2019, Tabreed was awarded a 32-year concession to develop district cooling systems for the Amravati government complex, with a planned investment of around USD 43 million. To date, approximately USD 1 million has already been invested. He expressed Tabreed's eagerness to not only revive this concession in light of the new government's focus on Amravati's resurgence as the capital, but also to pursue additional integrated investments in Andhra Pradesh.

After this, Mr. Yogpal Singh, Director, Corporate Affairs, DP World, gave a presentation on the Bharat Mart initiative. Mr. Singh highlighted that Bharat Mart will contribute to achieving the target of achieving USD 100 billion bilateral trade in goods between the two countries by 2030. Noting that Bharat Mart is expected to be operational by the first quarter of 2026, Mr. Singh underlined that the project has already garnered significant interest from Indian companies from whom DP World has received over 9,000 expressions of interest thus far.

Following the expert sessions, Ambassador Alshaali began his address by underscoring the significant interest of UAE-based companies in exploring investment and business opportunities in Andhra Pradesh.



The Ambassador mentioned that his meeting with N. Chandrababu Naidu, the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, on the previous day was highly productive, noting a strong commitment from the state's leadership to developing its industries and securing the right investments. It was further mentioned that it was critical to improve connectivity between Andhra Pradesh and the UAE. Ambassador Alshaali advised that discussions with the Chief Minister had focused on increasing the number of direct weekly flights from the UAE to Andhra Pradesh, which could bring an additional half a million passengers annually to state's airports. This enhanced connectivity would not only strengthen people-to-people ties but also attract more investors to explore opportunities in the state.

Following the speaker presentations, an interactive session was held on how the UICC can assist local businesses with any potential challenges faced in expanding their operations to the UAE, as well as in relation to other queries participants had in terms of export and investment opportunities in the country.

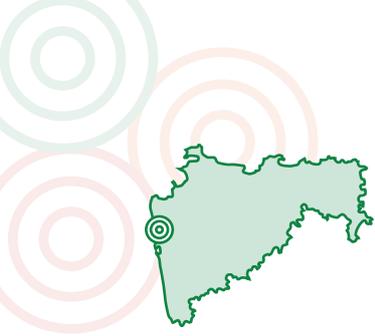
Apart from technical questions on specific aspects relating to setting up businesses in the UAE, participants outlined several potential challenges and opportunities they wished to gain support upon, namely:

- ▶ Expanding collaboration with UAE companies in rice processing technologies.
- ▶ Understanding the various incentives in establishing manufacturing plants in the UAE.
- ▶ Understanding the market opportunities in the electric vehicle sector in the UAE and potential for investments in this field.
- ▶ The future outlook and potential in the personal aero mobility and the drone sector in the UAE.

Following the interactive dialogue, Shri T.G. Bharath, Minister of Industries, Commerce, and Food Processing, Government of Andhra Pradesh provided a keynote address. He emphasised the need to rebuild confidence among UAE companies that had come to the state before 2019 and had subsequently faced challenges in respect to the previous state government's economic policies. The Minister assured participants that these issues would be addressed to encourage more UAE companies to invest in the state. He further expressed optimism about future partnerships, highlighting that the upcoming industrial policy, expected within 100 days, would be the best in India. The Minister also emphasised the importance of ongoing engagement between the UICC and the APEDB to expedite business processes and to foster a strong partnership between Andhra Pradesh and UAE companies.

Dr. N. Yuvaraj, IAS Secretary of Industries, Commerce and Food Processing, Government of Andhra Pradesh wrapped up the discussions with closing remarks. He highlighted Andhra Pradesh's reputation for industrialisation, noting the state's significant advantage of having a large land bank of 50,000 to 60,000 acres available for industries ready to invest. He mentioned that the state government is focused on ensuring that investments proceed quickly, without bureaucratic delays, and that policies are executed efficiently. He assured both UAE and Indian participants of the Andhra Pradesh government's commitment to fostering this strategic relationship, encouraging collaboration to explore new opportunities and elevate the partnership to greater heights.

The Vijayawada roundtable was the largest event organised by the UICC. With the presence of important stakeholders from both sides, it set the stage for enhanced collaboration between the UAE and Andhra Pradesh, identifying sectors such as green energy, pharmaceuticals, food processing, and the marine industry as key areas for potential investment. A significant highlight of the roundtable was that it marked the first bilateral event organised by the new Andhra Pradesh Government, with the UAE being the first country to engage with the state under the new administration.



# UAE-India Women's Entrepreneurship Roundtable Mumbai

On 23 January 2025, the UICC organised a business roundtable in Mumbai. The event was held in collaboration with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry Ladies Organisation (FICCI-FLO Mumbai Chapter).



The event, which was headed by H.E. Abdulnasser Jamal Alshaali, PhD, the UAE Ambassador to India, brought together over 40 Indian women business owners and entrepreneurs from a diverse range of industries, including healthcare, education, finance, jewellery, and textiles, among others. The focus of the event was to highlight opportunities that exist for women entrepreneurs and business owners to benefit from the CEPA.

The event began with a welcome address by Ms. Aarmeen Mogul Dordi, Chairperson FICCI FLO Mumbai Chapter. Ms. Dordi highlighted the vast opportunities created by the CEPA in enhancing trade, investment, and cross-sector collaboration.

She reaffirmed FICCI FLO Mumbai's commitment to empowering women-led businesses as active contributors the growth of the UAE-India bilateral economic partnership.



Ambassador Alshaali provided special remarks to roundtable participants, highlighting the critical role of women entrepreneurs in fostering trade and economic growth between the UAE and India.

Ms. Joyshree Das Verma, FLO National President, shared an overview of FICCI FLO's 41-year journey of empowering women entrepreneurs across India. With 20 Indian chapters, the organisation focuses on fostering entrepreneurship, enhancing skills, and promoting economic independence for women at all levels of society.

Ms. Kawthar Alkharoosi, Investments Supports and Inducements Senior Specialist at the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Economic and Trade Affairs Department outlined how the UAE is an ideal investment destination, aiming to attract USD 150 billion in inward investments by 2030. Ms. Alkharoosi highlighted the UAE's stable, secure, and investor-friendly environment, supported by transparent regulations, low taxes, and 100 percent foreign ownership in specific sectors.

Ms. Kiran Gera, Past FLO National President and Founder Chairperson of the FICCI FLO Mumbai Chapter, emphasised the strong and growing bilateral ties between India and the UAE, reflecting on FLO's longstanding engagement with the UAE through initiatives like the 2021 Dubai Expo and the 2023 women entrepreneurs' delegation that engaged with key UAE entities, including the Ministry of Economy, SheTrades, and the Gender Balance Council. She highlighted opportunities for collaboration across sectors, particularly in trade, business, and health.

Following the speaker presentations, an interactive session was held on how the UICC can assist women-owned businesses with any potential challenges faced in expanding their operations to the UAE, as well as in relation to other queries participants had in terms of export and investment opportunities in the country.

Apart from technical questions on specific aspects relating to setting up businesses in the UAE, participants outlined potential challenges and opportunities they wished to gain support upon, namely:

- ▶ Understanding export opportunities and the overall UAE market for fragrances and perfumery.
- ▶ Understanding how to leverage e-commerce for exports of products.
- ▶ Incentives and support available for women entrepreneurs.
- ▶ Opportunities in the digital marketing sector in the UAE.
- ▶ Collaboration opportunities in the medical tourism sector.
- ▶ Export opportunities in the UAE for hand woven textiles.
- ▶ Understanding the scope for the export of services to the UAE.
- ▶ Understanding the compliance requirements for SMEs wishing to set up operations in the UAE.

The Women Entrepreneurship Roundtable was a landmark event—the first dedicated to a specific business community—reinforcing the UICC's commitment to supporting women entrepreneurs. A key outcome was the UICC gaining direct insights into the challenges they face and the opportunities they seek in the UAE.

# Other Events



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### 100 Cube Start-up Conclave

On 11 February, Mr. Ahmed Aljneibi, Director of the UICC, participated in the 100 Cube Start-up Conclave at IIT Bhubaneswar. The event was led by Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Hon'ble Union Minister of Education and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. The event aimed to catalyse the entrepreneurial spirit of eastern India, and witnessed the participation of representatives from foreign governments, industry, academia, start-ups, and senior business leaders.



### Uttar Pradesh Ground Breaking Ceremony (GBC) 4.0

On 19 February, Mr. Ahmed Aljneibi, Director of the UICC, was invited to attend the Uttar Pradesh Ground Breaking Ceremony (GBC) 4.0. During the event, Shri Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India, announced the launch of 14,000 projects across Uttar Pradesh. The projects related to sectors such as manufacturing, renewable energy, food processing, housing and real estate, hospitality and entertainment, and education.

### The Indian Brand and Leadership Conclave 2024

On 20 February 2024, the BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BRICS CCI) organised the Indian Brand and Leadership Conclave 2024 in Goa. Mr. Ahmed Aljneibi, Director of the UICC, was invited to deliver the keynote address. During his remarks, Mr. Aljneibi apprised the audience of the UAE-India CEPA as well other impactful agreements that the two countries had recently signed.



### CEPA Anniversary Celebrations

On 1 May 2024, the UAE Embassy in India, in collaboration with the UICC, held an event in Mumbai to celebrate the second anniversary of the implementation of the CEPA. Hosted by H.E. Abdunnasser Alshaali, PhD, the UAE Ambassador to India, the event was attended by eminent dignitaries from various strategic sectors. During the event, Ambassador Alshaali underlined the important role Indian businesses continue to play in guiding the UAE-India bilateral partnership, and emphasised the exciting potential for even greater economic cooperation between the two countries in the years to come.

## Roundtable Discussion on the Start-up Ecosystem

On 19 July 2024, a roundtable discussion on the start-up ecosystem was held at Lovely Professional University, Punjab. Mr. Ahmed Aljneibi, Director of the UICC, was invited to the event as the Chief Guest. During his remarks, Mr. Aljneibi highlighted how the UAE and India are leveraging their complementary strengths to foster a dynamic collaboration in this critical sector. Mr. Aljneibi noted that the signing of the CEPA had laid the groundwork for increased investment, streamlined market access, and enhanced knowledge exchange between the two nations. Mr Aljneibi further apprised the audience of the various forward-thinking policies the UAE Government has implemented to cultivate a conducive environment for start-ups.



## CEPA Celebration event at the Indian Business and Professional Council Dubai

On 6 September 2024, the Indian Business and Professional Council Dubai hosted an event to celebrate two years of the CEPA Agreement. Mr Ahmed Aljneibi, Director of the UICC, was invited to provide the keynote address. Mr Aljneibi underlined the benefits of the CEPA, as well as the work the UICC is undertaking to ensure businesses in both nations gain tangible benefits from the agreement.

## Inauguration of the BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry Chandigarh Chapter

On 27 September 2024, Mr Ahmed Aljneibi, Director of the UICC, was invited as a special guest at the inauguration ceremony of BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BRICS CCI) Chandigarh Chapter. During the event, Mr. Aljneibi provided a briefing on how the UAE-India CEPA can be leveraged to promote deeper economic and strategic engagement within the broader BRICS Plus framework.



## Inaugural Founders' Retreat

From 6 to 8 December 2024, the inaugural UAE-India Founders' Retreat was held in the UAE, bringing together over 65 leading Indian start-up founders, UAE business leaders, investors, and policymakers.

Co-organised by the UAE Embassy in Delhi, Offline, and the UICC, the three-day retreat aimed to strengthen ties between the UAE and India's burgeoning start-up ecosystems, while fostering cross-border collaboration and innovation. With participating retreat

ventures averaging a valuation of USD 3.5 billion, alongside representation from founders of 13 Indian unicorn start-ups and five publicly listed companies, this first-of-its-kind platform facilitated transformative collaborations and highlighted the mutual benefits of closer investment ties between the two nations.

The first day was held at the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) and began with an address by H.E. Abdalnasser Alshaali, PhD, UAE Ambassador to India. Ambassador Alshaali emphasised the importance of fostering collaboration between the UAE and India, and highlighted the UAE's ongoing commitment to enhancing the bilateral investment landscape. This was followed by a special address from H.E. Essa Kazim, Governor of the DIFC. H.E. Kazim underscored the DIFC's critical role in connecting visionary investors with the next generation of entrepreneurs. The session continued with an engaging fireside discussion on Dubai's dynamic ecosystem as a global hub for start-ups, featuring Hadi Badri, CEO of Economic Development at the Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism. Faraz Khalid, CEO of Noon, wrapped up the first day of the event, offering expert insights into building and scaling e-commerce businesses in the UAE.

The second day of the Founders' Retreat was held at the Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM), beginning with welcome remarks by H.E. Hamad Sayah Al Mazrouei, CEO of the ADGM Registration Authority. This was followed by a fireside discussion titled "Invest with Abu Dhabi", featuring H.E. Badr Salim Al Olama, Director General of the Abu Dhabi Investment Office (ADIO). Ahmad Ali Alwan, CEO of Hub71, delivered a keynote address on Abu Dhabi's entrepreneurial ecosystem and the critical role Hub 71 plays in supporting innovation driven businesses. The keynote was followed by an engaging discussion between Fadi Ghandour, Founder of Wamda Capital, and Utsav Somani, Founder of Offline, focusing on how the UAE's ecosystem is driving innovation and sustainable growth beyond financial investments.

H.E. Hareb Mubarak Almuhairei, Executive Director of ADIO, concluded the formal proceedings with remarks emphasising the UAE's ongoing commitment to supporting Indian entrepreneurs and promoting mutual economic benefits. The day wrapped up with special closed-door sessions featuring representatives from the UAE's sovereign wealth funds.

Day three of the Retreat, brought together partners from Grant Thornton to engage in meaningful discussions on potential expansion opportunities in the UAE with Indian start-up founders. The day concluded with participants attending the Formula One Grand Prix at the world-renowned Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi.



### Chhattisgarh Investor Connect Roadshow

On 23 December 2024, Mr Ahmed Aljneibi, Director of the UICC, was invited to attend the Chhattisgarh Investor Connect Roadshow in New Delhi. The event, which was headed by Shri Vishnu Deo Sai, the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh, saw the participation of many senior-level government officials and industry leaders, with discussions on potential investments in several high-potential sectors, including manufacturing, IT, and infrastructure.



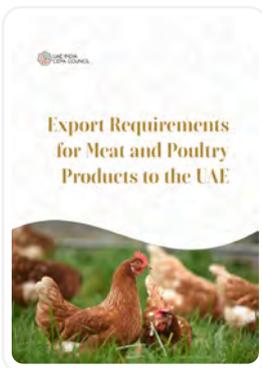
## Published Reports

The UICC has published several reports in 2024, covering a wide range of topics that align with insights gathered from roundtables and emerging areas of collaboration between the UAE and India. These reports explore key sectors such as tourism, AI, robotics, agriculture, and electric vehicles, reflecting the dynamic and evolving bilateral relationship.



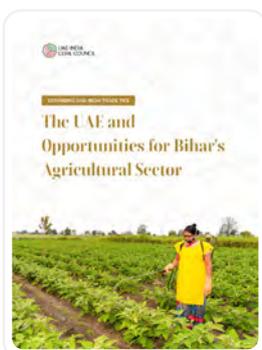
### The Electric Vehicles Sector in the UAE

This report provided an overview of the UAE's electric vehicle (EV) sector, detailing key policies, initiatives, and incentives undertaken by the UAE to promote green mobility and sustainability. It further highlighted the potential opportunities for Indian EV manufacturers in the UAE and how they stand to gain from the country's ambitious plans to accelerate electric vehicle adoption.



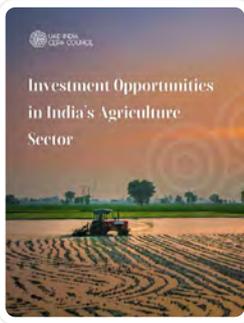
### Export Requirements for Meat and Poultry Products to the UAE

The report aimed to serve as a comprehensive guide for Indian exporters of meat and poultry products, outlining the regulatory requirements for entering the UAE market. It detailed the steps for production controls, federal and emirate-level registration processes, and import inspection procedures. Additionally, it provided clear guidelines on food labelling, packaging standards, and essential documentation to ensure compliance with UAE regulations.



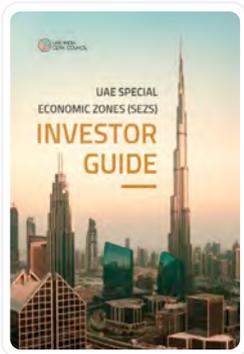
### The UAE and Opportunities for Bihar's Agricultural Sector

This report explored the potential for agricultural exports from Bihar to the UAE, focusing on market demand, legal frameworks, and opportunities facilitated by the CEPA. Highlighting Bihar's strengths in agriculture, it presented significant opportunities for the state's exporters to benefit from the UAE's role as a global trade hub. This report was inaugurated at the UICC business roundtable held in Patna. A version in Hindi was also published and inaugurated at the event.



### Investment Opportunities in India's Agriculture Sector

The report highlighted investment opportunities for UAE stakeholders in India's agriculture sector, focussing on areas like food processing, animal husbandry, and agri-tech. It explored the sector's growth potential, supported by India's vast consumer market, diverse resources, and government incentives.



### UAE Special Economic Zones (SEZs) Investor Guide

The report served as a comprehensive guide for businesses looking to establish operations in the UAE's special economic zones (SEZs). Covering over 40 SEZs, it provided detailed insights to help businesses identify the most suitable location for business set-up, highlighting key advantages such as 100 percent foreign ownership, tax incentives, and seamless access to global markets.



### The UAE Tourism Sector: Opportunities for Indian Investment

This report provided an overview of the UAE's tourism sector, examining its rapid growth, key economic contributions, and the role of international visitors. It highlighted the strong tourism ties between the UAE and India, emphasising India's position as the UAE's largest tourist source market. The report also explores Indian investments in the UAE's hospitality sector, showcasing key players and emerging opportunities.



### The UAE's AI, Robotics and Automation Industries

This report provided an overview of the UAE's AI, robotics, and automation industries, highlighting their rapid expansion and transformative impact on the country's economy. It examined key government initiatives, such as the UAE Strategy for Artificial Intelligence and the Fourth Industrial Revolution Strategy, which aim to position the UAE as a global leader in AI and automation. The report also explored investment opportunities, emphasising the UAE's strong infrastructure, regulatory incentives, and growing market potential.



# Newsletters

The UICC quarterly newsletters served as a platform to showcase the initiatives, events, and achievements that strengthened the dynamic UAE-India partnership under the CEPA. Each edition featured articles on key topics such as bilateral trade opportunities, sectoral insights, and emerging economic trends. The newsletters also provided comprehensive summaries of Council-organised events, along with interviews with members who participated in business roundtables. A notable highlight was the 'Business in Focus' section, which spotlighted Indian businesses collaborating with the UAE or aiming to expand to the country, showcasing their role in advancing the bilateral economic relationship.



ISSUE ONE



ISSUE TWO



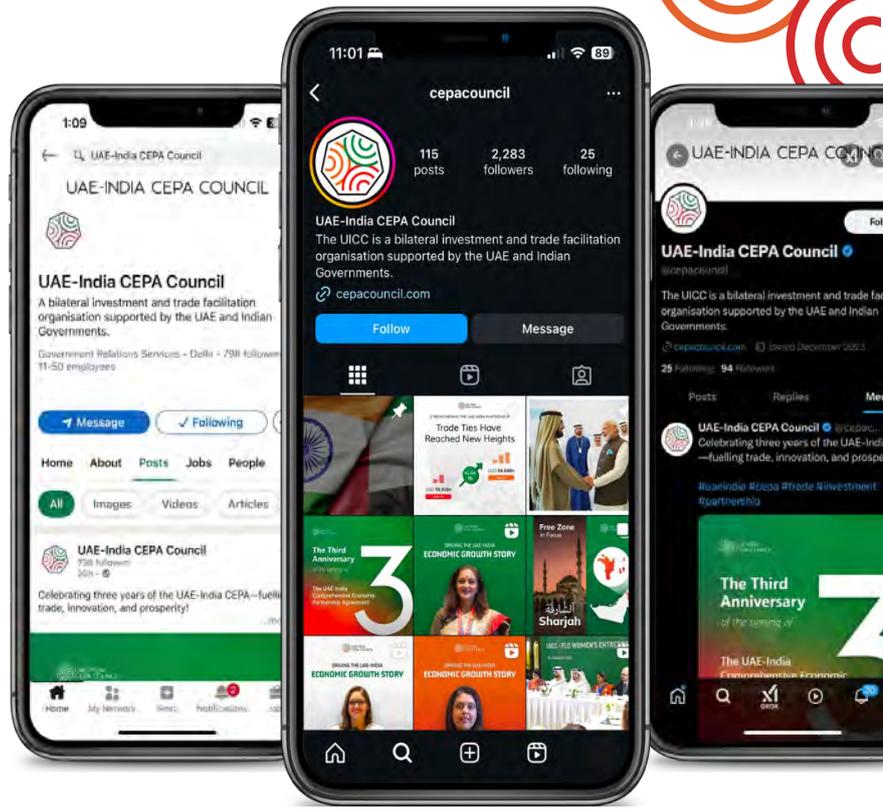
ISSUE THREE



ISSUE FOUR

# Social Media

The UICC’s social media pages showcased key achievements and highlights of its activities throughout the year. It featured updates on significant events, exclusive interviews with participants from business roundtables, and celebrations of major milestones in the UAE-India economic partnership. These posts aimed to keep followers informed and engaged with the ongoing efforts to strengthen bilateral trade and economic ties.



**Our Audience: 3K+**



Instagram



LinkedIn



Twitter (X)

Total New Followers	<b>2405</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>94</b>
Total Engagements	<b>5063</b>	<b>4016</b>	<b>2820</b>
Total Profile Visits	<b>12,112</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>391</b>
Total Link Clicks	<b>8276</b>	<b>4016</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Total Impressions	<b>895,828</b>	<b>151,500</b>	<b>27,065</b>

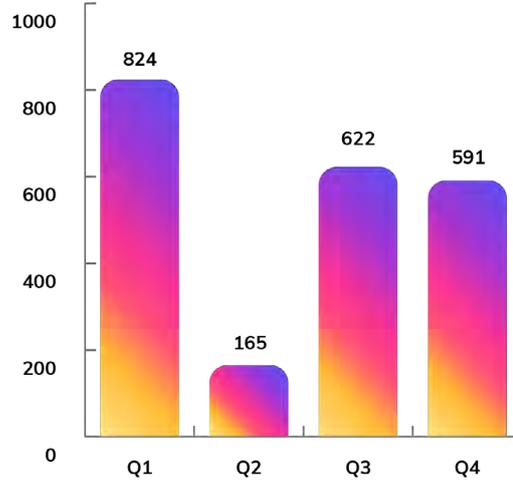
The above table presents the overall performance metrics across Instagram, Twitter (X), and LinkedIn, summarising follower growth, engagements, profile visits, link clicks, and total impressions for the past year.

## Quarterly Follower Growth Summary (2024)

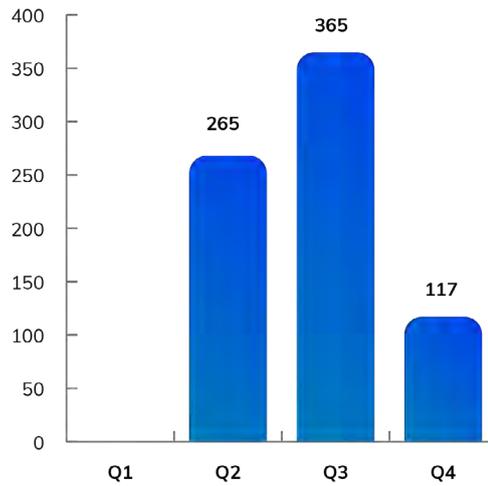
The below graphs illustrate the quarterly follower growth trends across Instagram, Twitter (X), and LinkedIn throughout 2024. It highlights platform-specific fluctuations in audience acquisition, providing insights into seasonal trends and engagement effectiveness across different quarters.



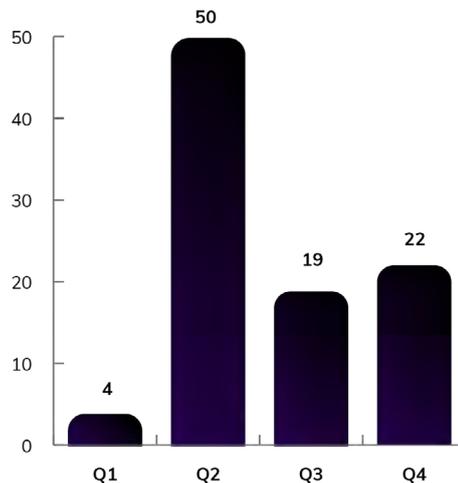
Instagram



LinkedIn



Twitter (X)





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