



UAE-INDIA
CEPA COUNCIL

NEWSLETTER

2026 ISSUE ONE

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Director's Message

It is a pleasure to present the first quarterly newsletter of the UAE-India CEPA Council (UICC) for the new year. We begin this edition at a moment that has tested the resolve of the Middle East and beyond. Tensions across the region have brought renewed scrutiny to questions of stability and confidence in the Gulf, and the UAE's response has been instructive. Its institutions have remained resilient, its financial systems have continued to function without disruption, and its business environment has not missed a step. This is not a matter of fortune; it is the result of deliberate design.

The UAE has long operated on the principle that resilience must be built in advance, not improvised in the moment, and this period has borne that out. For businesses and investors operating across the UAE-India corridor, it has served as a powerful reaffirmation that the UAE is not merely a place of opportunity, but a system built to protect and sustain it. It is with this confidence that we carry forward into the year ahead.

In the same spirit of determination and resilience, our aim is to carry forward the momentum with which we concluded the previous year and continue working closely with businesses in both the UAE and India to further strengthen the partnership between our two economies.

In January, His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan undertook a visit to India, where, together with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the two leaders announced an update to the bilateral trade target. Having already surpassed USD 100 billion last year, the two countries have now set a new target of USD 200 billion in bilateral trade to be achieved by 2032. This development reflects not only the deepening economic partnership between the two countries, but also the strength, ambition, and dynamism of the business communities that continue to drive this relationship forward.

February also witnessed India hosting the AI Impact Summit in New Delhi, bringing together businesses, policymakers, researchers, and innovators from across the world to discuss the transformative potential of artificial intelligence. Being present in the city during this period, one could truly sense the extraordinary energy surrounding the conversations on AI; it felt less like a conventional conference and more like a global festival of ideas and innovation. The visit of His Highness Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, further underscored that cooperation in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence is now recognised as a key pillar of the UAE-India partnership at the highest levels of leadership. This edition of the newsletter explores the growing potential of this collaboration and the opportunities it presents for businesses and innovators in both countries.

With regards to artificial intelligence, the UAE has consistently maintained a forward-looking approach. The appointment of the world's first Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence in 2017 reflected an early recognition of the transformative potential that emerging technologies would hold for the global economy. While the UAE is widely recognised for its strong physical infrastructure and advanced technological capabilities, equally important are the "soft-infrastructure" foundations that support innovation, modern legal frameworks, business-friendly regulatory environments, globally connected financial systems, and specialised ecosystems that enable companies to scale in new and emerging sectors.



These have been developed carefully over the years to ensure that businesses entering the UAE find not only opportunity, but also stability and long-term support. The philosophy in the UAE has always been to anticipate change and lead it, rather than wait to be shaped by it. It is this same mindset that continues to guide the country as it navigates a rapidly evolving global landscape. Through periods of uncertainty and transformation, the UAE has consistently demonstrated resilience, adaptability, and confidence in its long-term vision. This ability to remain steady while continuing to progress and adapt has defined the country's journey over the past five decades and will remain equally important as it looks towards the future.

As we move through the year ahead, we remain confident that the partnership between the UAE and India will continue to deepen across trade, investment, innovation, and technology. The UAE-India CEPA Council will remain committed to supporting businesses, fostering new connections, and helping unlock the next phase of growth in this dynamic bilateral relationship.

Ahmed Aljneibi

Director, UAE-India CEPA Council

UAE-India AI Partnership

Advancing Innovation, Infrastructure and Inclusive Growth

The AI Impact Summit 2026, held in New Delhi, convened global policymakers, technology leaders, and industry stakeholders to examine the rapidly evolving role of artificial intelligence in the global economy. The summit was attended by His Highness Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, whose visit to India for the event highlighted the growing strategic importance of emerging technologies in the UAE-India relationship. His participation underscored the strong political commitment from both countries to deepen collaboration in advanced technologies, with artificial intelligence increasingly emerging as a central pillar of bilateral cooperation



Complementary strengths of the partnership

The UAE-India AI partnership is built on a set of deeply complementary capabilities.

The UAE has positioned itself as one of the world's leading AI ecosystems. In 2017 it became the first country to appoint a Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence, followed by the establishment of the Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence (MBZUAI) in 2019. Today, a 2025 study by TRG Datacentres has ranked the UAE second globally in AI capability, with more than 188,000 advanced AI chips and approximately 6,400 megawatts of compute capacity. Beyond infrastructure, the UAE offers world-class investment capital, a globally connected financial system, and reliable energy, a critical and often overlooked input for large-scale AI systems. Equally important is its sophisticated soft infrastructure, including modern legal frameworks, innovation-focused free zones such as Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) and Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM), and regulatory environments designed to attract and protect technology enterprises.

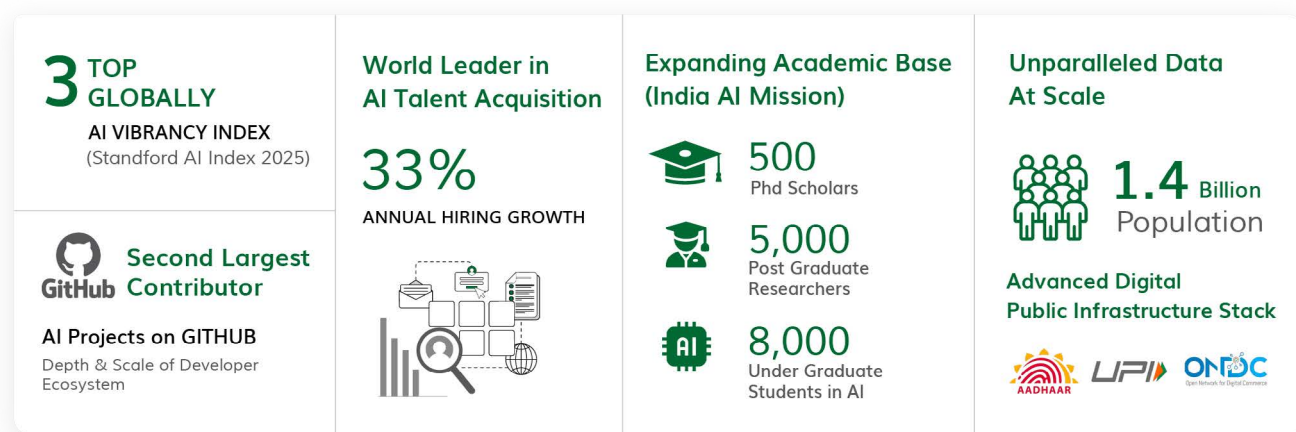


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India contributes a different but equally essential set of strengths. The Stanford AI Index 2025 ranks India among the top three globally in the AI Vibrancy Index, and the country leads the world in AI talent acquisition, with roughly 33 percent annual hiring growth. India is also the second-largest contributor to AI projects on GitHub, reflecting the depth and scale of its developer ecosystem. This talent pipeline is supported by an expanding academic base under the IndiaAI Mission, which currently supports 500 PhD scholars, 5,000 postgraduate researchers, and 8,000 undergraduate students in AI. India also provides unparalleled data at scale, generated by a population of 1.4 billion and supported by one of the world’s most advanced digital public infrastructure stacks, including Aadhaar, Unified Payments Interface (UPI), and Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), creating the raw material necessary to train and deploy large-scale AI systems.

Together, the UAE’s capital, compute infrastructure, and enabling ecosystem complement India’s talent, data, and digital platforms, forming a powerful foundation for cooperation across the AI value chain.



Pillars of UAE-India AI Cooperation



Emerging UAE-India initiatives in AI and digital technologies

Recent developments illustrate how this strategic alignment is translating into concrete projects:

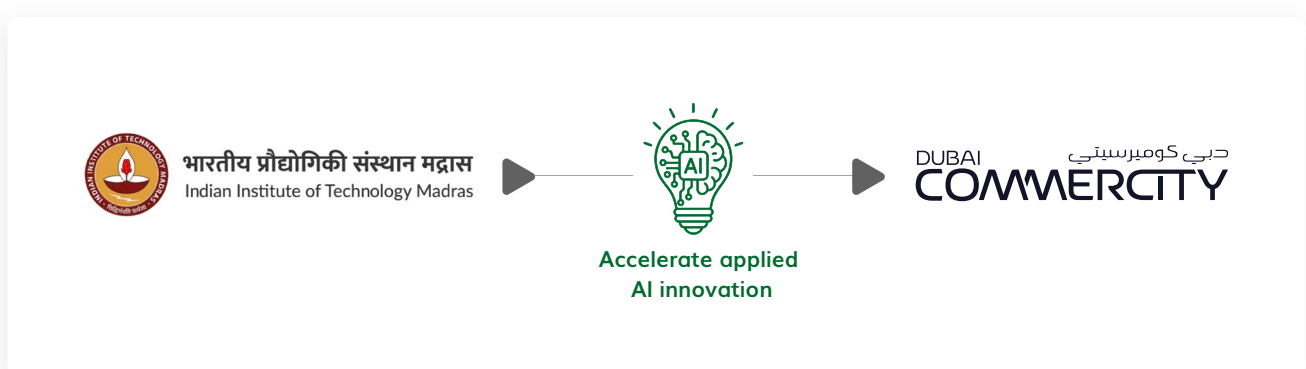
India's national-scale AI supercomputer

Announced on the sidelines of the AI Impact Summit 2026, G42, MBZUAI, Cerebras, and India's C-DAC will establish an 8-exaflop AI supercomputer in India under full Indian data sovereignty. The system will support universities, researchers, and start-ups in developing large-scale AI models. This represents one of the most significant AI infrastructure investments in India and a landmark example of UAE-India technology cooperation.



IIT Madras Applied AI Innovation Centre - Dubai CommerCity

The IIT Madras Global Research Foundation will establish its first Applied Artificial Intelligence Innovation Centre at Dubai CommerCity to accelerate applied AI innovation and support technology-led economic growth. In its initial phase, the centre will host six applied AI start-ups with a combined valuation of USD 118 million and projected revenues of USD 281 million over five years.



UAE-India Web3 and AI Business Corridor

A strategic corridor launched to connect India's engineering talent with the UAE's regulatory environment, investment platforms, and global market access, creating a structured pathway for cross-border technology collaboration.

Towards a shared vision of human-centric and inclusive AI

Beyond commercial opportunities, both countries share a broader vision of ensuring that artificial intelligence contributes to human development and societal progress.

India's national strategy emphasises "AI for All", focusing on deploying AI solutions to address socio-economic challenges such as improving healthcare outcomes, strengthening agricultural productivity, expanding financial inclusion, and extending digital public services to underserved communities.

The UAE similarly emphasises a human-centric approach to AI, ensuring that technological progress remains aligned with inclusive development and societal wellbeing. The country's AI strategy places strong emphasis on deploying artificial intelligence in sectors that improve quality of life, support sustainable development, and expand access to digital capabilities across emerging economies.



A notable example of this vision was announced at the G20 Summit in Johannesburg in November 2025, where the UAE launched the "AI for Development" initiative, committing USD 1 billion to expand AI infrastructure and applications across Africa. The initiative aims to deploy AI solutions in sectors such as education, agriculture, healthcare, and digital infrastructure, reflecting the UAE's conviction that artificial intelligence should be deployed in the service of development, ensuring that no country is left behind in the AI age.

This shared philosophy creates strong opportunities for future collaboration. By combining India's technological talent and digital platforms with the UAE's capital, infrastructure, and global connectivity, the partnership has the potential to develop scalable AI solutions that improve healthcare access, strengthen food security, and expand digital services across emerging economies. In doing so, UAE-India cooperation in artificial intelligence can demonstrate how advanced technologies can serve not only markets, but broader human progress.

Indian Engineers in an AI World: Talent, Mobility, and Demand

Two panel discussions under the theme “Indian Engineers in an AI World: Talent, Mobility, and Demand” were held on 18 February 2026 at the India International Centre, New Delhi, on the sidelines of the India AI Impact Summit 2026. Curated by the AI Knowledge Consortium in partnership with the UAE-India CEPA Council, LinkedIn, the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in New Delhi, and Rishihood University, the session brought together leaders from government, industry, academia, and international institutions to examine how artificial intelligence is reshaping the future of India’s engineering workforce.



Opening the discussion, Maj. Gen. (Dr.) Pawan Anand, AVSM (Retd.), Director of the United Service Institution of India, emphasised that India must reposition its engineering talent to meet the demands of an AI-driven global economy. He noted that the country must move beyond its traditional role as the world's service provider and instead emerge as a global hub for design, innovation, and advanced technological capability, supported by strong partnerships across talent, hardware, and capital. India's scale of engineering talent, combined with its culture of agile and resource-conscious innovation, places the country in a strong position to play a leading role in the next phase of global technological transformation.

The event also marked the launch of the Workforce Intelligence Dashboard, powered by the LinkedIn Economic Graph, by Mr. Kumaresh Pattabiraman, Head of LinkedIn India. The platform enables policymakers and business leaders to track the AI transition in near real time by analysing how skills are evolving across industries, how professionals are moving between roles, and where talent or inclusion gaps are emerging. By providing live insights into workforce transformation, the dashboard supports more responsive and data-driven decision-making in the age of AI.



Panel 1 Industry Demand, Upskilling and Mobility

Moderated by Mr. Vivan Sharan, Secretariat Convenor of the AI Knowledge Consortium, the first panel explored how artificial intelligence is reshaping engineering roles, industry structures, and global talent flows. The discussion focused on how the convergence of AI, data, and cloud infrastructure is transforming the way engineers engage with business systems and operational challenges.

Panellists noted that the pace of technological change is increasingly outstripping traditional training pipelines, making continuous learning, interdisciplinary thinking, and systems awareness essential capabilities for the engineering workforce of the future.



Chris Pease, President and CEO of the Foundation for Agentic Networks, discussed the emergence of agent-driven digital ecosystems and the importance of combining AI capability with human decision-making. Piyush Somani, Promoter, Managing Director and Chairman of ESDS Software Solution Ltd., emphasised that engineers must remain focused on solving real customer and business problems rather than simply mastering technologies. Goda Ramkumar, Vice President of Data Science at Swiggy, illustrated how AI is already embedded across operational systems, enabling companies to significantly improve efficiency and decision-making. Manasvi Sharma, SVP at Gracenote, highlighted that engineers must increasingly focus on framing the right problems and interpreting insights from complex data systems. Mr. Pattabiraman provided a labour-market perspective, noting that AI is accelerating role transformation, with skill requirements evolving faster than job titles.

The discussion underscored that AI is not merely displacing jobs but fundamentally transforming the nature of engineering work. As AI systems become more capable, the ability to frame problems, work across disciplines, and understand business contexts is becoming as important as technical expertise. Panellists also emphasised that continuous learning and real-time workforce intelligence will be critical in helping organisations and policymakers respond to rapidly evolving labour market demands.

Panel 2

Academia-Industry Partnerships and Global Talent Mobility

Moderated by Ms. Laetitia Warjri, Director of Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement at the UAE-India CEPA Council, the second panel examined how academia, industry, and governments must collaborate to prepare engineers for an AI-augmented economy. The discussion focused on bridging structural gaps between education systems and industry requirements, strengthening talent mobility pathways, and building more flexible learning ecosystems.

Panellists emphasised that traditional education models must evolve rapidly to keep pace with technological change, particularly by shifting from rote learning toward applied, interdisciplinary, and problem-driven education.

Nabil Arnous, Chief Commercial Officer at Innovation City, Ras Al Khaimah, highlighted the gap between theoretical training and industry needs, noting that universities often focus on how AI works while industry requires professionals who can apply it to real business problems. Prof. Shobhit Mathur, Vice Chancellor and Co-Founder of Rishihood University, emphasised the importance of bringing industry directly into academic environments to shorten the feedback loop between curriculum and real-world demands. Ambika Banotra, Chief Representative of NRW Global Business GmbH, highlighted the growing role of start-ups and young innovators experimenting with AI applications across sectors. Apoorv Mahendru, Director Marketing and Deputy Director at the German Academic Exchange Service, emphasised the value of hands-on and vocational learning models that combine academic education with industry experience. Atul Kumar Tiwari, IAS (Retd.), Former Secretary of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, stressed that workforce development must move toward lifelong learning frameworks supported by modular certification and competency-based training systems.



The panel concluded that education, skilling, and employment must function as a continuous ecosystem rather than separate stages. Stronger collaboration between universities and industry will be essential to shorten the feedback loop between skills demand and education systems. Participants also agreed that lifelong learning, modular certification pathways, and greater mobility of skilled professionals will be critical to ensuring that engineers remain adaptable and globally competitive in the rapidly evolving AI landscape.



Latest News



[UAE-India Desert Cyclone II Military Exercise Concludes in Abu Dhabi](#)

The joint UAE-India military exercise Desert Cyclone II concluded in Abu Dhabi, strengthening defence cooperation and operational coordination between the two countries' armed forces.



[Emirati Scientists Join India's Antarctic Mission](#)

Scientists from the UAE joined India's Antarctic research mission, marking a new chapter in UAE-India scientific collaboration in polar research and climate studies.



[UAE-India Food Corridor Launched by Abu Dhabi Food Hub](#)

The UAE-India Food Corridor was launched by Abu Dhabi Food Hub, with APEDA's Bharati initiative highlighting agri-food start-ups and promoting deeper cooperation in agricultural trade and food supply chains between the two countries.



[UAE President Visits India for Bilateral Talks with Prime Minister Modi](#)

The UAE President visited India for high-level bilateral discussions with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during which the two leaders strengthened the bilateral partnership and launched a number of new initiatives across strategic sectors.



[UAE Becomes India's Second-Largest LNG Supplier](#)

Following a new long-term energy agreement, the UAE has emerged as India's second-largest supplier of liquefied natural gas (LNG), reinforcing energy cooperation between the two countries.



[UAE to Support Development of Dholera Economic Region in Gujarat](#)

The UAE will support the development of the Dholera region in Gujarat, contributing investment and expertise to one of India's major planned smart industrial cities.



Indian Army Chief Visits UAE to Strengthen Defence Ties

India's Army Chief, General Upendra Dwivedi, visited the UAE to enhance military cooperation, strategic dialogue, and defence collaboration between the two nations.



IIT Madras Global to Establish Applied AI Innovation Centre in Dubai

IIT Madras Global will establish an Applied AI Innovation Centre at Dubai CommerCity to promote research, innovation, and collaboration in artificial intelligence between India and the UAE.



Bioreform Expands Globally with Support from UAE-India CEPA Council

Bioreform is leveraging the UAE-India CEPA Council platform to expand internationally, highlighting the growing role of the bilateral ecosystem in supporting start-up growth.



UAE-India Partnership Strengthened Through AI Cooperation

India and the UAE expanded collaboration in artificial intelligence during the Abu Dhabi Crown Prince's visit to New Delhi, highlighting AI as a key pillar of future bilateral cooperation.



Prime Minister Modi Expresses Solidarity with UAE President

Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke with the UAE President to express India's solidarity and condemn recent attacks on the Gulf nation, reaffirming the close strategic relationship between the two countries.

Artificial Intelligence Across the UAE-India Start-up Series



This edition's Business in Focus section highlights the use of artificial intelligence observed across the start-ups participating in the UAE-India Start-up Series, the flagship programme of the UAE-India CEPA Council launched in 2025 to connect the innovation ecosystems of the two countries and enable meaningful engagement between Indian start-ups and UAE stakeholders. One of the notable insights that emerged through the Series was the pervasive integration of AI within start-up solutions. Rather than being limited to internal automation or cost optimisation, artificial intelligence is increasingly embedded directly within products and platforms designed to solve real-world challenges.

Among the 20 companies shortlisted to the final round, 12 incorporated artificial intelligence as a substantial component of their solutions. These start-ups travelled to New Delhi to present their innovations to UAE-based investors, ecosystem leaders, and corporate partners as part of the Series' final pitching sessions.

Even within this relatively small sample, the breadth of applications is striking. AI-powered solutions were observed across agriculture, financial services, logistics, healthcare, legal technology, climate technology, industrial safety, space infrastructure, human capital management, and sports analytics. The wide range of use cases within these 12 companies illustrates how AI is being applied to solve core operational and societal challenges across sectors.

The following start-ups from the Top 20 cohort demonstrate how artificial intelligence is being deployed in innovative ways:



4Climate

An agri-tech company transforming protected cultivation through intelligent automation. Its AI- and IoT-powered platform optimises climate control, irrigation, and nutrient delivery, improving crop yields while reducing resource consumption.



8Byte

An AI-native infrastructure platform for financial services that automates up to 80 percent of BFSI workflows, including onboarding, KYC verification, and compliance processes. The platform enables financial institutions to scale AI adoption securely and efficiently.



Data Sutram

A RegTech intelligence platform empowering digital finance through smarter and safer decision-making. By combining more than 250 data sources, it delivers real-time customer intelligence for fraud prevention, underwriting, and financial personalisation.



Digantara

A space-tech company building next-generation orbital infrastructure. Using proprietary sensors and in-house AI engines, it provides real-time tracking and predictive analysis of satellites and debris, improving safety and sustainability in space.



Doqfy

A unified contract management platform that automates and simplifies legal workflows. Through AI-driven document intelligence and no-code automation, enterprises can manage contracts from creation to compliance more efficiently.



DocketRun

An AI-powered industrial safety platform that detects and prevents unsafe events before they occur. Its edge-based computer vision systems enable proactive safety monitoring across manufacturing and heavy industrial environments.



EaseMyAI

A no-code automation platform designed to make enterprise AI adoption faster and more accessible. Its REDX engine integrates with more than 200 technologies to deliver plug-and-play automation across sectors such as manufacturing, ports, and logistics.



Endimension

An AI-first radiology platform accelerating the analysis of medical imaging across X-rays, CT scans, and MRIs. By combining AI algorithms with a network of certified radiologists, it enables faster and more accurate diagnoses.



Enmovil

A logistics and supply-chain orchestration platform powered by predictive AI engines. The platform optimises forecasting, route planning, and operational visibility, helping enterprises reduce time and cost across supply chains.



Fitsol

An AI-powered Decarbonisation-as-a-Service platform helping industries measure, report, and reduce emissions. Its Kyoto engine identifies carbon hotspots and enables actionable reduction strategies across Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions.



Kazam

An EV infrastructure company building a smart, hardware-agnostic charging network. With AI-driven energy management and IoT-enabled charging stations, it provides predictive analytics and real-time monitoring for batteries and charging infrastructure.



StepOut

A sports-tech platform democratising access to professional performance analytics. It combines AI-driven analysis with human expertise to deliver match and player insights for grassroots and youth footballers.



ZekoAI

An enterprise talent intelligence platform transforming hiring accuracy and collaboration. Its AI system aligns roles with candidate capabilities, conducts intelligent interviews, and continuously improves recruitment decisions through data-driven insights.

Taken together, these companies illustrate how artificial intelligence is being deployed across a remarkably wide range of industries within India's start-up ecosystem. From agriculture and healthcare to logistics, space infrastructure, and decarbonisation, AI is increasingly being used as a tool to address complex operational challenges and create scalable technology-driven solutions.



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