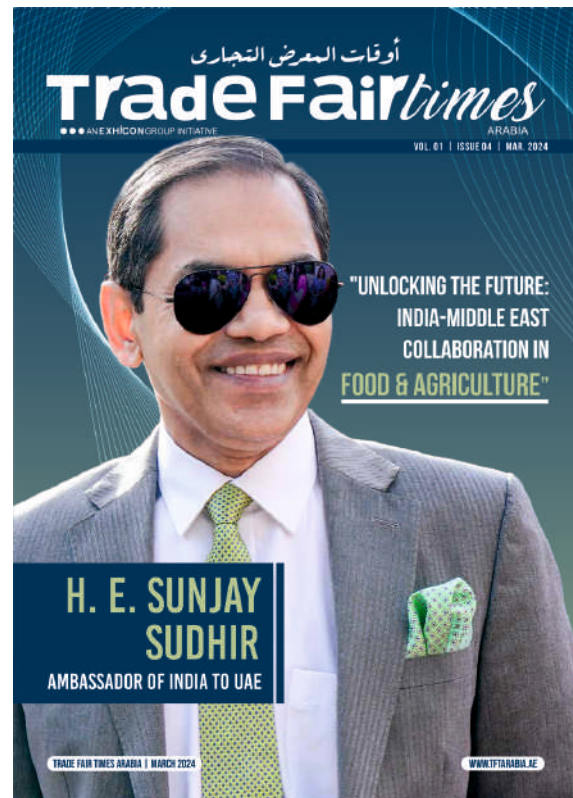


**9th GOLDEN
EXCELLENCE
AWARDS**

**Promoting
Tolerance &
Coexistence
in the UAE**

H.H. Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan
Cabinet Minister, Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence, UAE



About **Global Expo Times** (GET)

Global Expo Times (GET) is a monthly Business, Trade, Events and Lifestyle Magazine initiated by Vertex Events, with a strong focus on the UAE and an International outlook.

GET was officially unveiled at the 8th Golden Excellence Awards by H.H. Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan, Cabinet Minister and Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence, UAE. The Magazine Features Industry News, Business Stories, Expert Views, Interviews and Special Reports, Covering the latest developments across key sectors. With a growing readership across the UAE, India, GCC and International markets, GET provides a platform for Businesses, Entrepreneurs, Professionals and Industry Leaders to share their achievements, ideas and opportunities with a wider audience.

Vertex Events, the company behind GET, has been active in the Middle East for more than a decade, organizing Exhibitions, Conferences, Award ceremonies and Cultural Events. Its portfolio includes the International Property Show, Golden Excellence Awards, Aligarh Mushaira – Jashn-e-Hindustan, Blockchain Dubai and various Dubai property exhibitions. Through its real estate activities, Vertex Events also connects property Developers, Investors, Businesses and high-net-worth Individuals, Creating Opportunities for Networking and Business Development.

Global Expo Times is the media arm of this growing platform. The magazine provides businesses and personalities with opportunities to reach a wider audience through Cover Stories, Interviews, Industry features, Special reports and Advertising. GET continues to grow as a platform connecting the business and events community, with the aim of informing readers, highlighting achievements, promoting businesses and showcasing opportunities across the UAE and international markets.

*“ Together, let’s inspire, inform, and
innovate through Global Expo Times.”*



MESSAGE *from* CEO

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to another edition of Global Expo Times (GET).

The UAE continues to grow as a leading destination for Business, Investment, Tourism and International Events. Exhibitions and Conferences have become an important part of this growth, bringing together companies, professionals, investors and decision-makers from around the world.

At GET, our aim is to keep our readers informed about the people, businesses and events shaping Trade, Real Estate, Technology, Investment, Entrepreneurship and the wider business community. In this edition we also look back at highlights from our previous issue and thank our readers, partners, exhibitors and industry leaders for their continued support.

Dubai has established itself as a major International Centre for Exhibitions and Conferences. Its busy events calendar covers a wide range of industries, creating valuable opportunities for companies to promote their businesses, enter new markets, meet potential partners and build long-term relationships.

The progress of Dubai and Abu Dhabi reflects the wise leadership of the UAE and the strong unity among all seven Emirates. This spirit of cooperation has helped create a stable and welcoming environment for businesses, investors and communities from around the world.

We are also proud of the successful 9th Golden Excellence Awards, organized by Vertex Events under the patronage of H.H. Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan, Cabinet Minister and Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence, UAE. The awards recognize Individuals and Organizations that have achieved excellence in their respective fields and made a meaningful contribution to Society and the Nation. Looking ahead to September, Dubai will once again welcome a strong line-up of major trade shows and business events, including Middle East Energy, AIM Congress, International Property Show, Dubai Derma, Crypto Expo, Arabian Travel Market and The Forex Expo, along with many other specialized exhibitions.

These events provide an excellent opportunity to meet new clients, explore markets, exchange ideas and develop business relationships.



Our ambition is for Global Expo Times to be more than a magazine. We want GET to be a trusted platform that connects the business community with the people, companies and events driving growth across the UAE and beyond.

I invite you to explore this edition and discover the opportunities that lie ahead.

The future belongs to those who have the vision and courage to build it.

*Warm regards,
Pushkin Agha
Founder & CEO
Global Expo Times*

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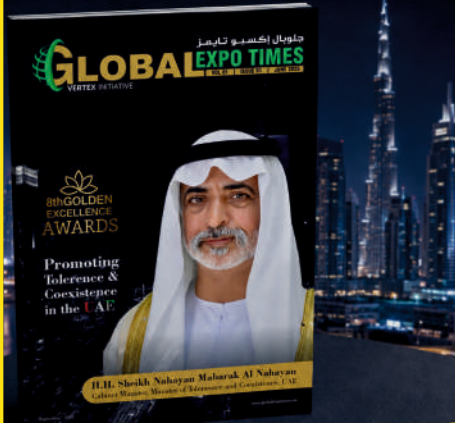
REAL ESTATE

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Investment Shows
Dubai Developers
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Celebrating Excellence



H.H. Sheikh Nahayan bin Mubarak Al Nahayan Honours Winners of the 9th Golden Excellence Awards

His Highness Sheikh Nahayan bin Mubarak Al Nahayan honoured the winners of the 9th Golden Excellence Awards at a prestigious ceremony held at Taj Exotica Resort, The Palm, Dubai. The distinguished gathering brought together diplomats, business leaders, entrepreneurs, innovators, media personalities and prominent members of the community.

The ninth edition continued the proud legacy of the Golden Excellence Awards, which have been recognising outstanding achievements across diverse fields since 2014, under the esteemed patronage of H.H. Sheikh Nahayan bin Mubarak Al Nahayan, Cabinet Minister and Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence, UAE.

The 9th Golden Excellence Awards were proudly organised by Vertex Events in collaboration with Diya India Foundation, honouring individuals and organisations whose exceptional leadership, innovation, excellence and service have made a meaningful contribution to society and their respective fields.

The 2026 Golden Excellence Awards and Summit focused on the UAE's Year of the Family, under the theme "Growing in Unity", highlighting the importance of stronger families, resilient communities, coexistence, tolerance and mutual respect.

Addressing the award winners, distinguished guests and supporters of Vertex Events, H.H. Sheikh Nahayan expressed his pleasure at joining the gathering and congratulated the recipients for their outstanding achievements. He emphasised that the awards celebrate not only professional excellence, but also service, character, leadership

innovation and human wellbeing. He also noted Dubai's spirit of enterprise and optimism under the leadership of H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai.

Reflecting on the summit theme, H.H. Sheikh Nahayan noted that "Growing in Unity" begins within the family, where values such as respect, honesty, responsibility and compassion are first nurtured. Strong families create strong communities, which in turn build strong nations.

He also highlighted the valuable contribution of the Indian community to the UAE's success story, recognising its professionalism, entrepreneurship, dedication and friendship, and underscoring the longstanding relationship between India and the UAE.

Concluding his remarks, H.H. Sheikh Nahayan called for continued commitment to family unity, human dignity, inclusion, care for elders and support for young people and People of Determination. He congratulated the award recipients and commended Vertex Events & Diya India Foundation for its continued commitment to excellence, compassion and human progress, while reaffirming the shared vision of stronger families, stronger communities and a brighter future.

and a commitment to improving the lives of others.

He highlighted the UAE's enduring culture of excellence and praised the visionary leadership of H.H. Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, whose vision has positioned the country as a global beacon of progress,





Ahsan Rasheed

Founder & Chairman, Peace Home Development

Recipient of 9th Golden Excellence Awards 2026
Real Estate Leader of the Year



Global Expo Times – Exclusive Interview with Ahsan Rasheed, Founder & Chairman, Peace Home Development

By: Shaneer Siddiqui

1. Tell us about yourself, your business journey, and your contribution to the UAE.

I did not come to the UAE with a great fortune or a large organization behind me. I started with experience, determination and a belief that solving problems creates value.

My real estate journey began by helping struggling projects move forward—supporting developments with completion, repositioning, sales and, most importantly, customer commitments. This experience gave me the confidence to establish Peace Homes Development.

In a relatively short period, we have launched nine projects, with most expected to be delivered by the end of this year. While I am proud of our growth, what matters most to me is the impact we create: building homes, generating opportunities and contributing to the UAE's remarkable development journey. The UAE has given me the opportunity to build something meaningful, and I remain deeply grateful for that.

2. What does receiving the 9th Golden Excellence Award, under the patronage of H.H. Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, mean to you?

This recognition is very personal to me. One of the most beautiful things I have experienced in the UAE is that when you sincerely work, contribute and give back to society, the leadership comes forward to encourage you.

The humility and accessibility of UAE leadership, despite everything they have achieved, are truly special. It has shaped my own understanding of leadership and inspired me to contribute more. Receiving this recognition under the patronage of H.H. Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan is

therefore both a great honour and a responsibility. It gives me renewed energy and reminds me that an award is not the end of a journey, but an encouragement to do more.

3. How do you see the role of the Ministry of Tolerance and Coexistence in strengthening the UAE's diverse and inclusive society?

Sometimes we become so accustomed to life in the UAE that we forget how extraordinary it is. People from almost every corner of the world, with different nationalities, religions, languages and traditions, live and work together, build businesses and raise families in harmony.

This does not happen automatically. It is the result of visionary leadership and a strong commitment to tolerance and coexistence.

The Ministry of Tolerance and Coexistence plays an important role in strengthening this unique environment, where diversity is respected and transformed into strength. The UAE has created more than a place where cultures coexist; it has created a society where people interact, learn from one another and contribute collectively. In a divided world, the UAE's ability to unite people through respect, inclusion and shared values is truly remarkable and one of its greatest strengths.

4. What opportunities do you see emerging in your industry in the coming years?

If we look at the world today, there is considerable uncertainty. Economies are changing and geopolitical situations are evolving, but my confidence in the UAE comes from its ability to turn challenges into opportunities. We have witnessed downturns and crises, yet the UAE has consistently

responded with forward-thinking policies, continued investment, strong infrastructure and new opportunities. Each time, it has emerged stronger and more competitive. That gives me great confidence in the future.

I see tremendous opportunities for the real estate sector because the UAE does not simply react to change—it anticipates it and prepares for what lies ahead. Its leadership has created an environment that encourages investment, innovation and sustainable growth. I remain extremely optimistic about the future of the UAE and its real estate sector, while recognizing that growth must always come with responsibility.

5. What are your company's key plans and priorities for the next phase of growth?

For me, the next chapter of Peace Homes Development is not simply about building more projects; it is about creating better ways of living. As technology, health, wellbeing and energy evolve, so do people's expectations from their homes. Our future developments will increasingly focus on wellbeing, smart technology, sustainability, energy efficiency, cleaner environments and spaces that genuinely enhance everyday life.

I also believe the definition of luxury is changing. Luxury is no longer just about marble, expensive finishes or a beautiful view. True luxury is a healthier environment, intelligent technology, comfort, peace of mind and quality time with loved ones. Inspired by the UAE's vision for a better quality of life, our ambition is simple: to keep raising the standard of what a home can offer.



Paras Shahdarpuri

Founder & Chairman, Nikai Group of Companies

Recipient of 9th Golden Excellence Awards 2026
for Electronic Design Leader of the Year



Global Expo Times – Exclusive Interview with **Paras Shahdarpuri**, Founder & Chairman, **Nikai Group of Companies**

By: Shaneer Siddiqui

1. Tell us about yourself, your business journey and your contribution to the UAE?

A - My story is one I never quite planned. I spent many years as a diplomat with the Indian Foreign Services, posted across China, the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Libya. In 1987, a missed connecting flight in Dubai changed everything. I stepped out into this city and felt something I had not expected, possibility. I returned to London, told my wife we were moving, and never looked back.

I founded Nikai in 1987, starting modestly with commodity trading. Over nearly four decades, the group has grown into a diversified conglomerate spanning electronics, home appliances, Technology, FMCG, Outsourcing, and logistics, serving over 75 million customers across 50 countries. The UAE gave me the platform to build all of this. My contribution, I hope, has been to give something back: through employment, through community initiatives, and through a brand that millions of families across the region trust in their homes every day.

2. What does receiving the 9th Golden Excellence Award for Electronic Product Design Leader mean to you?

A - It means a great deal, particularly because this recognition comes under the

patronage of His Highness Sheikh Nahyan Mubarak Al Nahyan, whose commitment to tolerance, coexistence, and human achievement I deeply admire. I have been associated with the Golden Excellence Awards since their very first edition in 2014, and watching this platform grow has been a privilege. To be recognised as an Electronic Product Design Leader at the 9th edition feels like a validation of everything the Nikai team has worked towards, not just commercial success, but meaningful, accessible innovation that genuinely improves lives.

3. How do you view the role of the Ministry of Tolerance and Coexistence in shaping the UAE's society?

A - The UAE's greatest achievement is not its skyline or its economy, it is the society it has built. Over 200 nationalities living, working, and thriving together in harmony is not accidental. It is the result of deliberate, visionary leadership. The Ministry of Tolerance and Coexistence gives institutional strength to values that are the very foundation of this nation. For those of us who came here from elsewhere and built our lives in the UAE, this environment of openness and mutual respect is something we do not take for granted.

4. What opportunities do you see emerging in your industry over the next few years?

A - Consumer electronics is being reshaped by artificial intelligence, smart home integration, and sustainability. Customers today want products that are intelligent, energy-efficient, and genuinely connected to their lifestyles. For Nikai, this represents an exciting frontier, one where our agility as a brand gives us a real advantage over larger, slower-moving competitors.

5. What are your company's key plans and growth priorities for the future?

A - We are investing significantly in product innovation, expanding our footprint across Africa and South Asia, and deepening our digital capabilities. But above all, our priority remains what it has always been, to make quality accessible. Innovation should not be a luxury. That belief-built Nikai, and it will continue to guide everything we do.

“For those of us
 who came here
 from elsewhere and built
 our lives in
 the UAE, this environment
 of openness and mutual
 respect is something we
 do not take for
 granted.”

- Paras Shahdarpuri -



Anis Sajan

Vice Chairman, Danube Group

Recipient of 9th Golden Excellence Awards 2026
for Business Innovation & Growth



Global Expo Times – Exclusive Interview with **Anis Sajan,** Vice Chairman, Danube Group

By: Shaneer Siddiqui

1. Tell us about yourself, your business journey and your contribution to the UAE.

My business journey has been closely intertwined with the growth story of the UAE. Danube Group began in 1993 with a single building materials outlet in Dubai, at a time when the city was undergoing a remarkable transformation. As Dubai grew into a global business and investment destination, Danube grew alongside it.

What started as a building materials business has evolved into a multi-brand conglomerate spanning building materials, real estate, home interiors, furnishings, sanitaryware, hospitality and lifestyle. Today, the Group has established brands including Danube Building Materials, Danube Properties, Danube Home, Milano, Casa Milano and Danube Hospitality, with operations extending across regional and international markets.

My own journey has evolved alongside that growth. I have had the opportunity to be part of different stages of the business, understand changing markets and contribute to building businesses that respond to the UAE's evolving needs.

I see my contribution as being part of that larger journey, creating opportunities, developing people, building businesses and helping take the UAE's entrepreneurial spirit into new markets.

2. What does receiving the 9th Golden Excellence Award under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan mean to you?

Receiving the 9th Golden Excellence Award under the

patronage of His Highness Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan is a great honour and a moment of reflection for me. Any achievement associated with my name is also a reflection of the people who have worked alongside me, supported me and trusted me over the years.

What makes this recognition particularly meaningful is that it encourages me to keep pushing myself. Business is a continuous journey. There is always another challenge to solve, another opportunity to explore and another level to reach.

3. How do you view the role of the Ministry of Tolerance and Coexistence in shaping the UAE's society?

Tolerance and coexistence are fundamental to the UAE's identity. What makes the country remarkable is that people from different nationalities, cultures, religions and backgrounds are able to live and work here while respecting one another.

The Ministry of Tolerance and Coexistence plays an important role in strengthening this culture and ensuring that tolerance remains an active value within society.

From a business perspective, I see the impact of this diversity every day. Bringing together people with different experiences and perspectives creates an environment where new ideas emerge, stronger teams are built and businesses can grow.

4. What opportunities do you see emerging in your industry over the next few years?

I believe the next few years will present both challenges and opportunities. With geopolitical

tensions, changing trade dynamics, supply-chain disruptions and economic uncertainty, businesses must remain resilient while continuing to focus on growth.

We have followed this approach ourselves. Even during the current crisis, we have continued with our growth plans. Since it began, we have opened multiple showrooms across Milano, Casa Milano and Danube Home, while Danube Properties has continued launching major projects and making significant announcements.

The UAE continues to offer strong fundamentals across real estate, construction, interiors, retail and lifestyle. Technology, AI, stronger supply chains and operational efficiency will create further opportunities. For me, the key is to protect what you have built while continuing to invest in the future.

5. What are your company's key plans and growth priorities for the future?

Our priority is to continue building on the foundation we have created while preparing the business for its next phase of growth.

We want to strengthen our existing businesses, expand into markets where we see genuine long-term potential and continue developing brands that can compete not only in the UAE but across the region and internationally.

A major priority is also to become more agile in the way we operate, whether that is through better supply-chain management, technology-led processes or understanding customers more closely.

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Yousuf Fakhruddin Managing Partner, Fakhruddin Properties

Recipient of 9th Golden Excellence Awards 2026
 for Sustainability in Real Estate



Global Expo Times – Exclusive Interview with **Yousuf Fakhruddin**, Managing Partner, Fakhruddin Properties

By: Shaneer Siddiqui

1. Tell us about yourself, your business journey, and your contribution to the UAE.

I come from a business family, so entrepreneurship was part of my upbringing. Our journey began in 1963 with trading and, over the decades, evolved across sectors, guided by a simple belief: business should create lasting value for the people and communities it serves. That legacy shaped my approach and eventually led me into real estate. In 2002, we established Fakhruddin Properties, giving us an opportunity to contribute directly to the UAE's remarkable growth and transformation. Today, our approach goes beyond the transaction. We focus on creating places that bring together wellness, sustainability, technology, and long-term quality of life.

2. What does receiving the 9th Golden Excellence Award under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan mean to you?

Receiving the 9th Golden Excellence Award is a great honour, particularly under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan. I see it not only as recognition of what we have achieved, but also as an encouragement to keep raising the standards we set for ourselves. Awards are meaningful when they reflect the collective effort of a team. This recognition belongs to everyone at Fakhruddin Properties who

continues to challenge conventional thinking, uphold our commitments, and work towards creating greater value for our customers and communities.

3. How do you view the role of the Ministry of Tolerance and Coexistence in shaping the UAE's society?

The UAE's strength lies in its ability to bring together people from different cultures, backgrounds, and perspectives around a shared sense of opportunity and belonging. The Ministry of Tolerance and Coexistence plays an important role in nurturing these values and reinforcing the UAE's position as a truly global society. For businesses, this creates an environment where collaboration, innovation, and diverse thinking can flourish. It is a powerful foundation for building communities that are inclusive, respectful, and connected.

4. What opportunities do you see emerging in your industry over the next few years?

Real estate is entering a more experience-driven era with growing opportunities around wellness-led communities, sustainable development, intelligent technology, and data-driven management. AI will increasingly become part of how buildings operate and how residents experience their homes. At the same time, the fundamentals remain key:

transparency, quality, reliable delivery, efficiency, and long-term value. The developers who can combine innovation with these fundamentals will be best positioned for the future.

5. What are your company's key plans and growth priorities for the future?

Our priority is to build for the long term. The future of real estate is not just about buildings that last, but environments that help people live better for longer. That is why longevity is becoming central to how we approach design, wellness, sustainability, technology, and the overall community experience. We see strong potential for continued growth in Dubai and the wider region. As we expand, our focus will remain on future-ready developments that deliver lasting value, adapt to changing lifestyles, and support healthier, more sustainable communities. For us, growth is not just about how much we build, but the lasting impact of what we build.

We see strong potential for continued growth in Dubai and the wider region. As we expand, our focus will remain on creating future-ready developments that deliver lasting value, adapt to changing lifestyles, and contribute meaningfully to healthier, more sustainable communities. For us, growth is not only about how much we build, but about the lasting impact of what we build.



Dhiraj Jain

Founder & Chairman, 1XL Holdings

Recipient of 9th Golden Excellence Awards 2026
for Creating Hope in Times of Crisis



Global Expo Times – Exclusive Interview

with Dhiraj Jain, Founder & Chairman, 1XL Holdings

By: Shaneer Siddiqui

1. Tell us about yourself, your business journey and your contribution to the UAE.

My name is Dhiraj Jain & I am an entrepreneur, investor and Founder & Chairman of 1XL Holdings. My journey has always been driven by one belief: business should create value beyond balance sheets. The UAE gave me an environment where ambition is encouraged, innovation is embraced and people from across the world can build together.

Through 1XL Holdings, we are building an ecosystem of businesses with the potential to scale, bringing together entrepreneurship, strategy, operating capabilities and capital around long term value creation.

But I believe contribution cannot be measured only through business. During the recent Middle East escalation, when airspace closures and widespread flight disruptions left hundreds of travellers stranded, my wife, Ms Mamata Dhiraj Jain, our children Jainam and Jivika, and I opened the Jainam Jivika Farm in Ajman to them. What began as an effort to provide shelter soon became a temporary home and community for hundreds of strangers.

2. What does receiving the 9th Golden Excellence Award under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan mean to you?

I receive this recognition with gratitude and humility. To be recognised with the Golden Excellence Award for "Creating Hope in Times of Crisis" makes deeply meaningful because none of what happened was planned for

recognition. When people were stranded, our only thought was how we could help.

I am especially proud that my family is part of this honour. Our children saw firsthand that privilege carries responsibility and that sometimes the most valuable thing we can offer another person is simply a sense of safety and belonging.

Receiving this recognition under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan makes it even more meaningful because the values of tolerance, coexistence and humanity that he represents are values we deeply admire.

3. How do you view the role of the Ministry of Tolerance and Coexistence in shaping the UAE's society?

The UAE is home to people of different nationalities, cultures and beliefs, yet we live and progress together. That does not happen by accident. The Ministry of Tolerance and Coexistence plays an important role in making these values part of the country's social fabric.

Our experience at the Jainam Jivika Farm reflected this beautifully. People who arrived as strangers, across nationalities and backgrounds, got together, helped one another and became a community. To me, that was the spirit of the UAE in action.

4. What opportunities do you see emerging in your industry over the next few years?

We are entering an extraordinary period where AI, technology, capital and entrepreneurship are

converging. I believe the next opportunity is not simply in discovering promising ideas, but in building the ecosystem around them that helps convert potential into sustainable, scalable businesses.

For investors too, the conversation is evolving from looking only at individual opportunities to understanding the strength of the platforms, systems and operating capabilities behind them. The UAE is exceptionally positioned at this intersection of global capital, talent, technology and markets.

5. What are your company's key plans and growth priorities for the future?

At 1XL Holdings, our next phase is about building scale with greater structure and discipline. We are focused on developing businesses across carefully selected sectors, strengthening their operating foundations and creating an ecosystem where shared capabilities, technology and strategic expertise can accelerate growth.

As this ecosystem expands, we also see increasing opportunities to collaborate with aligned investors, strategic partners and institutions who share a long-term approach to value creation.

Our ambition is to build 1XL into a platform where strong ideas, capable people, disciplined execution and aligned capital come together to create enduring enterprises.

For us, the real measure of growth will not simply be the number of businesses within the ecosystem, but the quality and value of what we build together.



Prof. Erik van Egeraat

Dutch Architect

Recipient of 9th Golden Excellence Awards 2026
for Sustainable Iconic Urban Design Architecture



We see strong potential for continued growth in Dubai and the wider region. As we expand, our focus will remain on creating future-ready developments that deliver lasting value, adapt to changing lifestyles, and contribute meaningfully to healthier, more sustainable communities. For us, growth is not only about how much we build, but about the lasting impact of what we build.

Prof. Erik van Egeraat



Global Expo Times – Exclusive Interview with Prof. Erik van Egeraat, Dutch Architect

By: Shaneer Siddiqui

1. Tell us about yourself, your business journey and your contribution to the UAE.

For over forty years, I have been fortunate to be invited to work in very different countries and cities across the globe. Being part of such a wide range of cultural, economic, and political circumstances has shaped and inspired me. Our offices have realized over two hundred projects, ranging from residential and public buildings to cultural institutions, commercial projects, and urban planning. Each of these projects has required an entirely different approach and brings new experiences. Over the years, I have learned that architecture becomes most interesting when it can unite contradictions. This is what I call 'mastering complexity': bringing together history and progress, economy and emotion, sensitivity and sensuality, without one overpowering the other. I recognize that the leadership of the UAE has done this very well. That is why I was excited to set up our new base here a couple of years ago. We are aiming to bring our international experience into direct dialogue with the UAE. My personal contribution is not about promoting one exclusive signature style.

2. What does receiving the 9th Golden Excellence Award under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan mean to you?

For me, an award gains meaning when it recognizes more than just

an image or a single project. I see this Award as recognition of our way of working. Combining ambition with responsibility and aligning imagination with the discipline of realization. To my understanding, His Highness's work in the UAE reflects these values, and therefore it is a great honor to receive this recognition specifically under his patronage. We are truly grateful.

3. How do you view the role of the Ministry of Tolerance and Coexistence in shaping the UAE's society?

The UAE demonstrates every day what it means for many cultures and ambitions to share the same society. The National Tolerance Program actively strengthens tolerance and coexistence through government, society, culture, and international cooperation. Diversity only truly becomes valuable when connections are forged between these differences, I believe. That is why I see tolerance and coexistence as active principles. In architecture, we face a very similar task: connecting diversity without erasing identity. A successful city allows different scales, functions, and people to coexist, while still forming an inspiring and recognizable whole.

4. What opportunities do you see emerging in your industry over the next few years?

The coming years will offer architects extraordinary technical possibilities. Artificial intelligence,

digital manufacturing, and new environmental technologies will increase the speed and scope of what we can design and improve the quality of life. What will remain scarce is judgment. Technology can create possibilities, but it cannot decide what deserves to exist. The real opportunity is to use these tools to master complexity and create places that people truly value and embrace. For me, this is also one of the strongest forms of sustainability.

5. What are your company's key plans and growth priorities for the future?

Our priority is to apply decades of international experience to new projects in the UAE, where design, engineering, selection of materials, and execution of the works can be treated as one continuous responsibility. We want to connect multiple experiences with different ways of working, while continuing to learn from the region itself.

Growth itself is not the goal. For me all our efforts only make sense when they strengthen our ability to realize work of lasting quality. Ultimately, I believe architecture should do more than simply perform. It should stimulate, engage, and offer solace. Architecture, at its best, must make us more aware of the beauty of life.



Syed Abbas Ali

Director, Zenith Business Solutions

Recipient of 9th Golden Excellence Awards 2026
for ICT Company of the Year Cloud & Infrastructure



Global Expo Times – Exclusive Interview with Syed Abbas Ali, Director, Zenith Business Solutions

By: Shaneer Siddiqui

1. Tell us about yourself, your business journey and your contribution to the UAE.

I am a technology entrepreneur and business leader with over two decades of experience in digital transformation, enterprise technology, cybersecurity, cloud computing, and AI-driven solutions. As the Director of Zenith Business Solutions, I have been privileged to lead a company that serves governments, enterprises, and critical infrastructure organizations across the UAE, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and India.

My business journey has been built on a simple principle: create value through innovation. Over the years, we have helped organizations modernize their technology landscapes, improve operational efficiency, and accelerate their digital transformation initiatives. In the UAE, our contribution has focused on supporting the country's vision of becoming a global hub for innovation, technology, and knowledge-driven growth.

2. What does receiving the 9th Golden Excellence Award under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan mean to you?

Receiving the 9th Golden Excellence Award is both a great honor and a humble experience. Being recognized under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh

Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan adds significant meaning to the award, as it reflects the UAE's commitment to recognizing excellence, innovation, and positive contributions to society.

I view this recognition not only as a personal achievement but as a reflection of the dedication of my team, our partners, and our customers who have been part of our journey. It motivates us to continue striving for excellence and creating meaningful impact across the region.

3. How do you view the role of the Ministry of Tolerance and Coexistence in shaping the UAE's society?

The Ministry of Tolerance and Coexistence plays a vital role in reinforcing the values that have made the UAE a model for peaceful multicultural living. The country's success is built on inclusiveness, respect, and equal opportunity, bringing together people from diverse backgrounds to contribute toward a shared future.

These values not only strengthen society but also create an environment where businesses can thrive, innovation can flourish, and global talent can collaborate effectively.

4. What opportunities do you see emerging in your industry over the next few years?

The next few years will be

defined by Artificial Intelligence, cybersecurity, cloud platforms, data analytics, and intelligent automation. Organizations are moving from digital transformation to AI transformation, creating unprecedented opportunities for increased productivity and smarter decision-making.

We also see significant growth in smart infrastructure, critical systems protection, managed services, and industry-specific AI solutions. Businesses that embrace innovation responsibly and securely will gain a significant competitive advantage.

5. What are your company's key plans and growth priorities for the future?

Our primary focus is to expand our leadership position in AI, cybersecurity, cloud services, and digital transformation across the GCC and beyond. We are investing in strategic partnerships, specialized talent, and innovative technologies that deliver measurable business outcomes for our customers.

At Zenith Business Solutions, our vision is to become a trusted regional technology powerhouse that helps organizations navigate the future with confidence. We remain committed to innovation, operational excellence, and creating long-term value for our stakeholders while contributing to the digital economy of the region.



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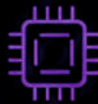
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S M Ilyas

Managing Director, Lotus Cargo

Recipient of 9th Golden Excellence Awards 2026
for International Logistics Excellence



Global Expo Times – Exclusive Interview with **S M Ilyas,** Managing Director, Lotus Cargo

By: Shaneer Siddiqui

1. Tell us about yourself, your business journey and your contribution to the UAE.

My name is Syed Mohammad Ilyas, originally from India, with over 25 years of experience in cargo logistics, freight forwarding and transportation. I established LOTUS CARGO FZCO in the UAE in 2019, with a vision to provide reliable, efficient and competitive logistics solutions.

The UAE has given me tremendous opportunities to grow professionally and personally. I believe my contribution is reflected through creating employment, serving customers professionally, building trusted business relationships and following ethical and responsible business practices.

I am proud to be part of a country where people from more than 200 nationalities live and work together. The UAE welcomed me and gave me the opportunity to build my business, and I remain committed to contributing to its continued economic growth and success.

2. What does receiving the 9th Golden Excellence Award under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahyan mean to you?

Receiving the 9th Golden Excellence Award under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahyan is a great honour and a proud milestone in my professional

journey.

For me, this recognition represents years of hard work, dedication and perseverance. It is also a recognition of the trust and support of my customers, business partners and team.

I see this award not only as a personal achievement but also as a tribute to everyone who has supported me. It motivates me to aim higher, continue delivering excellence and contribute positively to the UAE. With this honour comes a greater responsibility to move forward with humility, integrity and commitment.

3. How do you view the role of the Ministry of Tolerance and Coexistence in shaping UAE society?

The Ministry of Tolerance and Coexistence plays an important role in strengthening the UAE's social identity. In a country where people from diverse cultures and religions live together, promoting tolerance, respect, dialogue and coexistence is essential.

The Ministry also helps instil these values among younger generations through educational and community initiatives. Its work reinforces tolerance not only as a personal value but as an important part of the UAE's national identity.

I believe its greatest impact is reflected in everyday life—in workplaces, schools, communities and relationships between people of different backgrounds.

4. What opportunities do you see emerging in the logistics industry?

I see major opportunities in AI and digitalisation, sustainable logistics, automation and supply-chain resilience.

AI can improve route planning, forecasting, tracking and warehouse operations, while automation and IoT can increase efficiency and accuracy. Sustainable transportation and energy-efficient warehouses will also become increasingly important.

The biggest opportunity, in my view, is to move beyond traditional freight forwarding and become a technology-enabled supply-chain partner offering visibility, efficiency and sustainable solutions.

5. What are your company's key plans and growth priorities?

Our priorities are to expand our international logistics network, strengthen warehousing and fulfilment capabilities, and invest in technology.

We aim to grow across key markets in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Middle East, while improving digital tracking, inventory management and real-time shipment visibility.

Our long-term vision is to become an integrated logistics and supply-chain partner, using Dubai as a strategic gateway connecting Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Europe.



Asif Zaidi | Atif Sarwar

Managing Partners, O2 Group

Recipient of 9th Golden Excellence Awards 2026
for Real Estate Services



Global Expo Times – Exclusive Interview with **Asif Zaidi | Atif Sarwar**, Managing Partners, O2 Group

By: **Shaneer Siddiqui**

1. Tell us about yourself, your business journey and your contribution to the UAE.

Asif Zaidi entrepreneur with a strong passion for technology, business and creating meaningful solutions. My professional journey has taken me through the banking and real estate sectors in London, Kuala Lumpur and Dubai, giving me valuable international exposure and a broader understanding of global business and investment. I hold an MBA from the University of Greenwich, London.

In 2016, we established O2 Group with a vision to support international investors and entrepreneurs entering the UAE. What started as an offshore business setup company later expanded into corporate finance and eventually developed into a comprehensive business solutions platform offering real estate, mortgage, and corporate services. Our contribution to the UAE is centred on helping entrepreneurs, SMEs, corporates, and international investors establish, grow and invest with confidence.

Atif Sarwar is a seasoned entrepreneur with over 16 years of experience in the UAE market and is a veteran of the commercial banking sector. He holds a Master's in Business Administration and, throughout his career, has built a strong reputation for providing exceptional financial services to high-net-worth clients and stakeholders alike.

At O2 Group, he oversees the company's strategy and business development, driving the organisation's growth and long-

term direction. Prior to joining O2 Group, he worked across several domains within the UAE banking industry, gaining extensive experience and a deep understanding of the region's financial and business landscape.

Outside the world of banking and real estate, Atif has a range of interests and activities that keep him engaged and energised. He is passionate about sports and fitness, driving sports cars, flying microlight aircraft, and is also a certified PADI scuba diver.

2. What does receiving the 9th Golden Excellence Award under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan mean to you?

Receiving the 9th Golden Excellence Award is a tremendous honour and a deeply meaningful milestone. To receive recognition under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan makes this achievement particularly special. I see it not only as a personal recognition, but as a reflection of the dedication, professionalism and commitment of the entire O2 Group team. It inspires us to continue raising our standards, creating value for our clients and contributing positively to the UAE's dynamic business ecosystem.

3. How do you view the role of the Ministry of Tolerance and Coexistence in shaping the UAE's society?

The UAE's diversity is one of its greatest strengths. The Ministry of Tolerance and Coexistence has played an important role in creating a society where people

from different cultures, backgrounds and beliefs can live and work together with mutual respect. This environment has also contributed significantly to the UAE's economic success, as it gives international talent, entrepreneurs and investors the confidence to build their futures here.

4. What opportunities do you see emerging in your industry over the next few years?

I see significant opportunities emerging at the intersection of real estate, finance and technology. The UAE continues to attract global investors and entrepreneurs, creating demand for integrated and more sophisticated solutions. Technology, data and AI will increasingly transform how clients discover properties, access financing and establish businesses. The companies that succeed will be those that combine innovation with trusted human expertise.

5. What are your company's key plans and growth priorities for the future?

Our priority is to further strengthen O2 Group as a trusted, integrated platform for real estate, mortgages, corporate services and business solutions. We plan to embrace technology, enhance the client experience and expand our capabilities and international reach. Most importantly, we remain focused on sustainable growth and building long-term relationships. Our goal is to continue helping investors, entrepreneurs and businesses transform their ambitions into successful realities in the UAE.



Jitendra Kumar Singla Founder & Chairman, Seven Seas Hotel, Dubai

Recipient of 9th Golden Excellence Awards 2026
 in Hospitality



Global Expo Times – Exclusive Interview with Jitendra Kumar Singla, Founder & Chairman of Seven Seas Hotel, Dubai

By: Shaneer Siddiqui

Tell us about yourself, your business journey and your contribution to the UAE.

I have always believed that a successful business should leave behind more than a balance sheet; it should create employment, opportunity, confidence and a lasting institution. I am Dr. Jitender Singla, Founder & Chairman of Seven Seas Hotel in Dubai, and my entrepreneurial journey has been shaped by persistence, disciplined investment and the determination to build businesses with long-term value. Seven Seas Hotel represents an important chapter of that journey. With 317 rooms and a diverse hospitality offering, it brings together accommodation, dining, entertainment and events under one destination, supported by a multicultural team.

The UAE has given entrepreneurs something exceptionally valuable: an environment where ambition is encouraged, excellence is expected and people from across the world can build a future together. I therefore see my contribution not only through investment, but through jobs created, tourism and hospitality activity generated, opportunities given to suppliers and partners, and a workplace where different nationalities can grow together. Dubai has allowed me to dream bigger, and my responsibility is to convert that opportunity into sustainable value for the country, our guests and our people.

What does receiving the 9th Golden Excellence Award under the patronage of H.E. Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan mean to you?

An award becomes truly valuable when it reminds you of the responsibility that comes with recognition. Receiving the 9th Golden Excellence Award in Hospitality is therefore both an honour and a commitment.

I receive this recognition with deep gratitude and with great respect for H.E. Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al

Nahayan, UAE Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence. The values of tolerance, dignity and coexistence have particular meaning in hospitality because every day we welcome people of different cultures, nationalities and backgrounds through the same doors.

I also consider this a recognition of the entire Seven Seas Hotel family. A Chairman can set a vision, but hospitality excellence is created by the people who deliver it every day. This award belongs to the team members who welcome our guests, prepare their rooms and meals, maintain the property, solve problems and protect our standards. For me, the best way to honour the award is not to display it, but to raise our standards after receiving it.

"The best way to honour the award is not to display it, but to raise our standards after receiving it."

How do you view the role of the Ministry of Tolerance and Coexistence in shaping the UAE's society?

One of the UAE's greatest achievements is that diversity here is not treated as a challenge to be managed; it has become a strength to be celebrated. People from more than 200 nationalities live and work in the country, yet there is a shared sense of safety, respect and possibility.

The Ministry of Tolerance and Coexistence reinforces the values that make this possible. In hospitality, we experience those values in a very practical way. Our employees and guests may speak different languages, follow different traditions and come from different parts of the world, but inside a hotel they must feel equally welcomed and respected.

That is why I believe tolerance is also a leadership principle. When people feel respected, they collaborate better, serve better and contribute with greater confidence. The UAE has shown that coexistence is not only a social ideal; it can also be a foundation for economic progress, tourism and global competitiveness.

What opportunities do you see emerging in your industry over the next few years?

Hospitality is entering one of its most interesting periods. The traditional definition of a hotel is changing. Tomorrow's successful hotel will not simply sell a room; it will create an ecosystem of experiences around the guest.

Dubai is exceptionally well positioned for this evolution because tourism, aviation, business, events, gastronomy, entertainment and technology all meet here. I see major opportunities in experience-led hospitality, destination dining, nightlife and entertainment, wellness, events, personalised guest journeys and stronger direct relationships between hotels and customers.

Artificial intelligence will be one of the biggest accelerators. It can improve revenue management, marketing, guest communication, reservations, internal productivity and decision-making. But technology should never make hospitality cold. My philosophy is simple: let AI handle complexity and repetition so that our people have more time to deliver warmth, judgement and personal attention. The future of luxury will be high-tech behind the scenes and deeply human in front of the guest.

"The future of luxury will be high-tech behind the scenes and deeply human in front of the guest."

What are your company's key plans and growth priorities for the future?

Our next phase is about transformation before expansion. I want Seven Seas Hotel to become a stronger hospitality and lifestyle destination - a property recognised not only for accommodation, but for memorable dining, entertainment, celebrations, events and personalised experiences.

We are strengthening guest experience, food and beverage concepts, revenue and distribution, digital marketing, direct customer relationships and AI-enabled hotel operations.



Mohd Zia Hassan

Chairman, Infinity Group

Recipient of 9th Golden Excellence Awards 2026
 Visionary Business Leadership in Diversified Enterprise Development



Global Expo Times – Exclusive Interview with Mohd Zia Hassan, Chairman of Infinity Group

By: Shaneer Siddiqui

1. Tell us about yourself, your business journey, and your contribution to the UAE.

Honestly? I'm Canadian on paper, but Dubai is home — this city basically raised me. Back in 2010 I felt it was time to build something of my own, so I did, with barely any plan, just grit and long nights. Fast forward to today and Infinity Group is into real estate, hospitality, gold and diamonds, oil and gas, beauty, media, you name it. But if you ask what I've really contributed to the UAE, it's not the businesses — it's that I chose to bet everything on this place. Dubai gave me a shot, and I've spent every year since trying to pay that back.

2. What does receiving the 9th Golden Excellence Award, under the patronage of H.H. Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan, mean to you?

An award may have my name on it, but the journey behind it belongs to many people. This recognition reflects the dedication of my team and the trust of everyone who supported us. Receiving it under the patronage of H.H. Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan makes the honour meaningful. For me, it is not a finish line. It is a reminder to keep raising our standards and creating opportunities for others.

3. How do you see the role of the Ministry of Tolerance and

Coexistence in strengthening the UAE's diverse and inclusive society?

The UAE proves that people do not need the same background to share the same future. The Ministry of Tolerance and Coexistence plays an important role in building a society where different cultures feel respected and included. I see that spirit in my businesses every day. Our teams bring together different nationalities, perspectives and experiences. That diversity does not divide us; it makes us stronger, more creative and better connected.

4. What opportunities do you see emerging in your industry in the coming years?

The future will belong to businesses that understand both technology and people. In real estate, I see opportunities in transparent investment guidance, quality developments and long-term value. In hospitality, beauty and lifestyle, customers want experiences that feel personal. AI and digital platforms will change how we work, but trust will remain the foundation. Technology can open the door; relationships are what keep people coming back.

5. What are your company's key plans and priorities for the next phase of growth?

At Infinity Group, we are not chasing growth just to look bigger; we want to grow with purpose. Our next phase includes strengthening real estate, expanding hospitality and lifestyle brands, developing consultancy services, and investing in entertainment through Infinity Unplugged and Infinity Talks. We also have exciting plans in AI and technology, creating smarter solutions that will shape how businesses operate and connect with customers. My vision is simple: build a group that grows beyond borders while staying true to the values and ambition of the UAE.

“Some people see Dubai as a city of opportunities. I see it as proof that when vision meets hard work, there are no limits.”



- Mohd Zia Hassan -

INFINITY GROUP



MOHD ZIA HASSAN

Chairman, Infinity Group

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ADFD Highlights Global Water Security Efforts During World Water Week

By: Shaneer Siddiqui



Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, 27 August 2026: In line with World Water Week 2026, Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD) reaffirmed its commitment to advancing global water security as a foundation for stronger communities, sustainable development and long-term economic progress.

In the context of World Water Week's "Water for People and Progress" theme, ADFD highlights water's role in supporting communities and sustainable development. Through development financing, strategic partnerships and innovative approaches, the Fund supports efforts to strengthen water systems and expand access to sustainable water resources.

As part of this commitment, ADFD launched the Abu Dhabi Global Water Platform, a development

initiative focused on mobilising financing and partnerships to advance innovative solutions to global water challenges. The Platform aims to mobilise USD 2 billion between 2026 and 2030, including USD 1 billion committed by ADFD, with the ambition of supporting access to safe water services for approximately 10 million people worldwide.

The initiative supports UN Sustainable Development Goal 6, which calls for universal access to clean water and sanitation, and reflects the strategic importance of water within ADFD's 2030 Strategy.

H.E. Mohamed Saif Al Suwaidi, Director General of ADFD, said: "Water security is fundamental to sustainable development and to the progress of communities and economies. Through the Abu Dhabi Global Water Platform, we are bringing together financing,

partnerships and innovation to strengthen international cooperation, support high-impact projects and advance innovative solutions that help communities address current and future water challenges."

Through collaboration with partner governments and international development institutions, ADFD continues to support sustainable water projects, facilitate knowledge exchange and strengthen development impact.

During World Water Week, ADFD underscores the importance of continued international cooperation and innovative financing to ensure water can serve both people and progress, contributing to more resilient and sustainable communities worldwide.

Dubai Chamber of Commerce launches Uzbekistan Business Council to Strengthen Trade and Investment Ties between Dubai and Uzbekistan



- Maha Al Gargawi: “The Uzbekistan Business Council will play a key role in creating new avenues for bilateral cooperation across diverse sectors.”
- Non-oil trade between Dubai and Uzbekistan reached AED 10.3 billion in 2025.
- A total of 826 Uzbek companies were registered as active members of Dubai Chamber of Commerce by the end of 2025, representing annual growth of 21.3%.

Dubai Chamber of Commerce launches Uzbekistan Business Council to Strengthen Trade and Investment Ties between Dubai and Uzbekistan

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Maha Al Gargawi: “The Uzbekistan Business Council will play a key role in creating new avenues for bilateral cooperation across diverse sectors.”

Non-oil trade between Dubai and Uzbekistan reached AED 10.3 billion in 2025.

A total of 826 Uzbek companies were registered as active members of Dubai Chamber of Commerce by the end of 2025, representing annual growth of 21.3%.

Dubai, UAE, 26 August 2026 – Dubai Chamber of Commerce, one of the three chambers operating under the umbrella of Dubai Chambers, has announced the establishment of the Uzbekistan Business Council. The new council aims to strengthen cooperation between the business communities in Dubai and Uzbekistan, support the growth of trade and investment ties, and expand opportunities for collaboration across diverse sectors.

During the council’s inaugural meeting, held at Dubai Chambers’ headquarters, participants explored ways to develop new business opportunities and advance mutual investments. Discussions also focused on strengthening connections between Uzbek companies and their counterparts in Dubai,

facilitating the exchange of expertise and data, and exploring opportunities to organise bilateral business events.

غرفة دبي
DUBAI CHAMBER
للتجارة COMMERCE

Maha Al Gargawi, Vice President of Business Advocacy at Dubai Chambers, commented: “The launch of the Uzbekistan Business Council creates an important platform for strengthening trade and investment partnerships between Dubai and Uzbekistan. It will play a key role in creating new avenues for bilateral cooperation across diverse sectors, contributing to economic growth and the development of sustainable, long-term partnerships between the business communities in both markets.”

Ulugbekhon Maksumov, Chairman of the Uzbekistan Business Council in Dubai and Founder and CEO of Aksum Group, said: “Today marks an important milestone in the growing relationship between Uzbekistan and the United Arab Emirates. We are not simply launching another business organisation – we are creating a practical platform where entrepreneurs can connect with

trusted partners, investors can discover new opportunities, and companies from both countries can grow together. Together, we will build stronger business bridges between Uzbekistan and the UAE and contribute to the continued growth of trade, investment and economic cooperation between our two countries”.

The establishment of the Uzbekistan Business Council reflects Dubai’s growing position as an important hub for Uzbek companies and investors. Non-oil trade between Dubai and Uzbekistan reached AED 10.3 billion in 2025. During the same year, the number of active Uzbek companies registered as members of Dubai Chamber of Commerce rose to 826, representing annual growth of 21.3%. The chamber also welcomed 75 new Uzbek companies as members during the first half of 2026.

The Business Councils operating under the umbrella of Dubai Chamber of Commerce represent investor communities from different nationalities operating in the emirate. They work closely with the chamber to facilitate bilateral trade and investment between companies operating in Dubai and their counterparts in the countries represented by the councils, helping to strengthen cross-border economic partnerships.

World Health Expo to showcase Trillion-Dollar Growth across Pharma, Biotech, Longevity and Wellness at 2027 edition

By: Shaneer Siddiqui

World Health Expo (WHX) expands with the new Pharma, Biotech, Longevity and Wellness industry sectors

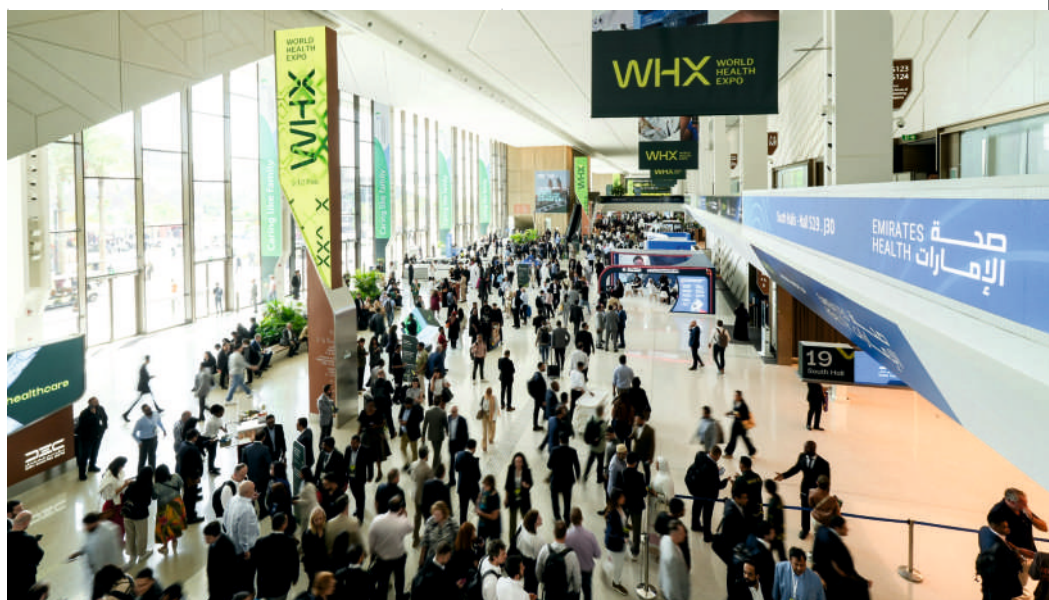
More than 235,000 professional visits, over 4,200 exhibitors and representatives from over 195 countries are expected in Dubai, reinforcing the emirate's status as a global life sciences FDI leader

WHX to take place from 25–28 January 2027 across Dubai Exhibition Centre, Expo City and Dubai World Trade Centre

Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 24 August 2026: World Health Expo (WHX) is expanding its focus on some of healthcare's fastest-growing markets, cementing Dubai's role as a leader in longevity, biotech, life sciences and pharma. The new Pharma, Biotech, Longevity and Wellness industry sectors will showcase the trillion-dollar growth in these industries during the upcoming 2027 edition of the world's largest healthcare event.

Taking place from 25–28 January 2027 across Dubai Exhibition Centre, Expo City and Dubai World Trade Centre, WHX will provide a platform for discussions and collaboration around the investment, innovation and partnerships shaping these rapidly expanding sectors.

The expansion comes at a time of significant healthcare investment across the GCC. According to PwC



Middle East, healthcare expenditure is projected to reach US\$159 billion by 2029, while more than 160 healthcare projects valued at approximately US\$53.2 billion are underway across the region.

The longevity economy is emerging as a significant global growth market. According to Bank of Singapore, the global longevity economy is projected to reach US\$5.4 trillion by 2034, growing at approximately 6–7% annually. The UAE's longevity market has been estimated to reach US\$32 billion this year, up from US\$19 billion in 2020, according to the Department of Health – Abu Dhabi.

Pharmaceuticals represent one of the clearest areas of growth. According to IQVIA, the global prescription medicine market reached approximately US\$1.7 trillion in 2025, increasing 10% year-on-year. The Middle East and

Africa recorded even stronger growth, with pharmaceutical sales increasing 18% year-on-year – the highest growth recorded across the regions analysed by IQVIA.

Solenne Singer, Senior Vice President - Healthcare, inD, said: "Healthcare investment is expanding rapidly into pharmaceuticals, biotech, longevity and wellness, marking a fundamental shift in where the industry sees future value. By bringing together the organisations that develop, fund, regulate and implement next-generation healthcare, World Health Expo (WHX) creates a powerful platform for conversations that matter. By showcasing the unique opportunities in Pharma and Biotech, alongside the increasing growth and potential of longevity and wellness, we can connect these fast-growing sectors with the wider healthcare ecosystem and the global investors watching the GCC region."



One of the most significant changes in healthcare is the increasing emphasis on preventing disease and extending the number of years people spend in good health. The new Longevity and Wellness sectors at WHX will provide a dedicated platform for organisations operating in this expanding market, with an emphasis on prevention, healthy ageing, precision health, and wellness.

The Dubai Longevity Authority, launched in June 2026, exemplifies this shift. With a mandate spanning the entire longevity value chain, it supports Dubai's ambitions to rank among the top three cities globally for quality of life and healthy life expectancy. Its focus on life sciences, biotechnology and advanced therapies mirrors WHX's four new sectors: Pharma, Biotech, Longevity, and Wellness.

The Longevity and Wellness sector focus areas will be anchored by the Healthspan Stage, running across four days at Dubai World Trade Centre. The Longevity & Wellness programme convenes

government leaders, healthcare providers, medical societies and researchers to explore preventive and metabolic health, the science of ageing, wearable and diagnostic data, and how longevity can move into an accessible, evidence-based part of mainstream healthcare.

Meanwhile, the new Pharma industry sector will bring pharmaceutical companies, biotechnology innovators, manufacturers, researchers, investors and healthcare organisations together as the life sciences sector enters a new phase of growth.

The pharmaceutical industry continues to expand globally, but growth in the Middle East and Africa is particularly strong, with Dubai emerging as an important destination for life sciences investment. In 2025, the emirate ranked No.1 globally for greenfield foreign direct investment (FDI) projects in life sciences, according to the Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism, based on Financial Times fDi Markets data. The emirate is also strengthening its research and commercial ecosystem through Dubai Science Park, which is home to more than 90 laboratories and 6,500 professionals.

Across the GCC, Saudi Arabia is pursuing similar ambitions through its National Biotechnology Strategy, aiming to establish the Kingdom as the leading biotechnology hub in the Middle East and North Africa by 2030, with biotechnology targeted to contribute more than US\$34.6 billion to non-oil GDP by 2040.

The exhibition will also convene the Biotech ecosystem, showcasing the organisations, products, and technologies driving growth in this sector, both regionally and globally. The Biotech & Life Sciences Forum, held on the Healthspan Stage, brings together pharmaceutical leaders, biotech companies, regulators, researchers and investors to examine how scientific discovery becomes deliverable medicine, from genomics and precision medicine to clinical trials, biomanufacturing and patient access.

Another new addition to the WHX show floor this year will be the Connections Programme. The week-long networking opportunity will take place across two dedicated Connection Lounges, bringing together the healthcare community in theme-led group networking sessions.

WHX 2027, which forms part of World Healthcare Week alongside WHX Tech and WHX Leaders, is expected to attract more than 90,000 unique attendees and 4,200 exhibitors, with representatives from more than 195 countries. For one week in January 2027, the three events will bring the healthcare industry together across two world-class venues in Dubai, connecting healthcare trade, digital health and leadership in one city, at one time.



WTM Spotlight Riyadh to Highlight Human Capital as key to Saudi Arabia's next phase of Tourism Growth

By: Shaneer Siddiqui



Ibrahim Osta

Senior Economic Growth Director
& Global Tourism Lead at
Chemonics International



Senior leaders from Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Tourism, King Salman Gate Project, Red Sea Global, King Saud University, Qiddiya and Jamaica's Minister of Tourism to explore education, career pathways and leadership development. The Future Stage will examine the talent required to support Saudi Arabia's ambition to attract 150 million visitors and create more than one million tourism jobs by 2030.

Taking place from 8-10 September at the Riyadh Front Exhibition & Conference Center (RFECC), WTM Spotlight Riyadh will connect the world to Saudi Arabia and Saudi Arabia to the world

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 27 August 2026: As Saudi Arabia moves into the next phase of its tourism transformation, developing the skills, leadership and local capabilities required to translate unprecedented investment into sustainable economic value will become increasingly important,

according to **Ibrahim Osta**, Senior Economic Growth Director and Global Tourism Lead at Chemonics International, and Professor of Management at the George Washington University School of Business.

According to the latest tourism-establishment data from Saudi Arabia's General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT), cited by Osta, the Kingdom already has just over one million employees in tourism activities, but only about one-quarter are Saudi nationals. According to Osta, the challenge is therefore no longer simply about generating employment but about ensuring that Saudi talent can enter the sector, develop specialist skills, and progress as the tourism economy expands.

"Saudi Arabia has created tourism employment at remarkable speed. The next phase is about depth: Saudi nationals entering the sector, building specialist expertise, progressing into leadership, and

increasingly creating businesses of their own. Scale and depth have to advance together. That is how rapid employment growth becomes lasting national capability," said Osta.

"Training centres alone do not create careers. Careers are created when occupational standards, employer demand, recognised qualifications, real hiring pathways and opportunities for progression are connected. The question our panel will explore with employers, educators and government is not simply how many people we train, but whether the system enables talented Saudi nationals to enter the sector, build expertise and see a credible path into leadership," he added.

These themes will form part of the wider industry discussion at the inaugural WTM Spotlight Riyadh, taking place from 8-10 September 2026 at the Riyadh Front Exhibition & Conference Center (RFECC). Bringing together

Saudi and international tourism leaders, policymakers, educators and industry experts, the event will explore the opportunities and challenges shaping the Kingdom's rapidly evolving tourism economy as it advances the ambitions of Vision 2030.

On the final day of the event, Osta will moderate the Future Stage session Talent & Leadership Panel: One Million Tourism Careers – Delivering Saudi Arabia's Tourism Vision Beyond 2030, held in partnership with Chemonics International. The session will examine the talent and leadership required to support the Kingdom's ambition to attract 150 million visitors and create more than one million tourism jobs by 2030, with a particular focus on the priorities needed as Saudi tourism moves from rapid expansion into its next phase of growth.

The session will bring together senior perspectives from across this emerging talent ecosystem. Panellists include Salem Al Shahrani, Chief of Staff, Rua Al Haram Al Makki, King Salman Gate Project; Raed Alghamdi, Assistant Manager – Education and Capability Building, Red Sea Global; Fahad Alhuqbani, Vice Dean for Graduate Studies and Scientific Research, College of Tourism & Archaeology, King Saud University; The Hon. Edmund C. Bartlett, OJ.CD.MP. LLD (Hon), Minister of Tourism, Jamaica; Muhannad Alghanmi, Director, Leadership Development, Qiddiya; and Salman A. Alarifi, General Manager of Technology Enablement, Ministry of Tourism, Saudi Arabia.

Looking beyond 2030, the skills required to support Saudi Arabia's tourism ambitions will continue to evolve as the Kingdom's visitor economy



Danielle Curtis

Regional Portfolio Director – UAE, RX

grows in scale and sophistication, with technology playing an increasingly important role across destinations, operations, and the visitor experience.

Salem Al Shahrani, Chief of Staff, Rua Al Haram Al Makki, King Salman Gate, said: "The tourism workforce of the future is not one workforce. A destination needs engineering and infrastructure, hospitality, retail, culture, mobility and technology, and all of those disciplines have to come together as one operating

"King Salman Gate is expected to generate more than 300,000 jobs by 2036 across an integrated destination adjacent to AlMasjid AlHaram, serving residents, pilgrims and visitors. The opportunity for Saudi Arabia is to build Saudi expertise across that full range of professions, with clear pathways into specialist and leadership roles, rather than thinking about tourism careers only in frontline terms."

The next generation of tourism leaders will require a broader mix of capabilities, spanning AI and data analytics, digital marketing and revenue management, immersive technologies such as AR and VR, crowd management, event operations, risk and safety, sustainability, bilingual guest service, and cross-cultural intelligence.

Danielle Curtis, Regional Portfolio Director – UAE, RX, said: "Saudi Arabia has demonstrated extraordinary ambition in developing its tourism sector, and the next phase is about ensuring the talent pipeline evolves at the same pace. As destinations, giga-projects, hospitality developments and visitor experiences continue to come online, investing in people will be fundamental to translating that growth into lasting economic impact.

"The scale of opportunity for young Saudi nationals is particularly exciting because tourism careers now extend far beyond traditional hospitality roles. WTM Spotlight Riyadh provides an important platform to bring employers, educators, government and international experts together to explore how we build those pathways earlier, develop future leaders and ensure Saudi talent plays a defining role in delivering the Kingdom's tourism ambitions beyond 2030."

WTM Spotlight Riyadh has been created to facilitate this exchange of knowledge and expertise, connecting Saudi Arabia's rapidly developing tourism ecosystem with international markets, businesses and industry leaders. By connecting the world to Saudi Arabia and Saudi Arabia to the world, WTM Spotlight Riyadh will provide a platform for collaboration, knowledge exchange, and commercial opportunities as the Kingdom continues to build the people, businesses, and experiences required for the next chapter of its tourism transformation.



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Dubai Chambers signs MoU with Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry to Strengthen Trade and Investment



H.E. Mohammad Ali Rashed Lootah: “We are committed to enabling Indian companies to benefit from Dubai’s competitive advantages.”

Dubai, UAE – Dubai Chambers has signed in Bengaluru a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FKCCI) to deepen cooperation and support the growth of trade and investment between Dubai and the Indian state of Karnataka.

Under the terms of the MoU, the two parties will develop tailored mechanisms to support the expansion of Karnataka-based companies into Dubai. Businesses will also receive comprehensive support to establish branches and headquarters in the emirate and capitalise on emerging opportunities across diverse

sectors. This will include information on regulatory requirements and data on promising markets.

H.E. Mohammad Ali Rashed Lootah, President and CEO of Dubai Chambers, said: “We are committed to strengthening cooperation between the business communities in Dubai and India, including Karnataka, and expanding economic partnerships that support the growth of bilateral trade and investment. Our goal is to enable Indian companies to capitalise on Dubai’s competitive advantages, including its strategic position as a hub to access regional and global markets and its status as a leading destination for business and investment across a wide range of sectors.”

As part of the agreement, the two parties will organise joint business

events to showcase promising business and investment opportunities, exchange market insights, and strengthen cooperation between the business ecosystems in Dubai and Karnataka. They will also work together to facilitate reciprocal trade missions and business delegations.

In 2025, Dubai International Chamber opened a representative office in Bengaluru, the capital of Karnataka, building on the launch of its first office in India in Mumbai during 2018. The

Bengaluru office supports efforts to strengthen cooperation between companies in Dubai and India and enables the chamber to work closely with the Indian business community. It also contributes to strengthening relationships with key public and private sector stakeholders and promoting Dubai’s competitive advantages as a global business destination.

The MoU forms part of Dubai Chambers’ ongoing efforts to strengthen engagement with strategic markets worldwide and build effective channels of cooperation between Dubai’s business community and international partners. It also reflects Dubai Chambers’ commitment to advancing cross-border partnerships and creating new opportunities for international collaboration.

By: Shaneer Siddiqui

In the presence of H.H Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi partners with Abu Dhabi Nature Academy to advance preservation of Sheikh Zayed Protected Areas Network



EAD and Abu Dhabi Nature Academy Launch Ranger Training Programme

Abu Dhabi, 30 August 2026: The Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Abu Dhabi Nature Academy to launch an integrated training programme to strengthen the capabilities of rangers across the Sheikh Zayed Protected Areas Network. The agreement was signed in the presence of His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan during the 23rd Abu Dhabi International Hunting and Equestrian Exhibition (ADIHEX 2026).

The partnership combines EAD's expertise in environmental protection and reserve management with the

Academy's specialised training capabilities. Rangers will receive advanced skills in environmental monitoring, smart conservation technologies, eco-tourism, leadership and field operations**.

The programme will be delivered through three stages: assessment, practical field training and professional certification, with long-term impact evaluation to ensure sustainable results.

His Highness Sheikh Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan said the initiative reaffirms the UAE's commitment to the legacy of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan by protecting nature reserves, developing national talent and strengthening environmental sustainability.

Dr Shaikha Al Dhaheri, Secretary General of EAD, highlighted the vital role of rangers in safeguarding Abu Dhabi's natural heritage, while Dr Mubarak Al Shamsi, Chairman of Abu Dhabi Nature Academy, emphasised the importance of developing skilled professionals for effective conservation.

The MoU was signed during ADIHEX 2026, running until 6 September at ADNEC Centre Abu Dhabi. Abu Dhabi Nature Academy is part of Ekthar Wildlife Development Group, affiliated with Erth Zayed Philanthropies, and focuses on applied education, professional training and conservation solutions.

By: Shaneer Siddiqui

Fishermen and Maritime professionals showcase their Forefathers' Legacy at Al Maleh and Fishing Festival

By: Shaneer Siddiqui

The 13th edition of the Al Maleh and Fishing Festival is drawing strong visitor turnout, offering a lively window into the UAE's maritime heritage and traditional crafts.

Organised by the Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) and Dibba Al Hisn City Municipality, the festival features marine heritage displays and hands-on experiences showcasing the traditions, livelihoods, and professional practices that have shaped the culture of Emirati coastal communities across generations.

The festival, which concludes on Sunday, provides an immersive showcase of the Al Maleh (salted fish) industry and the UAE's maritime heritage, highlighting traditional expertise and first-hand insights from fishermen and practitioners.

The programme includes sail-making, boatbuilding, fishing tools, and traditional methods of preparing, salting, and canning Al Maleh fish, in addition to traditional maritime crafts and handicrafts. Visitors can also enjoy heritage, educational, and entertainment activities celebrating the rich legacy of maritime professions and

industries practised by the people of the UAE.

H.E. Mohammad Ahmed Amin Al Awadi, Director-General of SCCI, said the Al Maleh and Fishing Festival continues to strengthen its position as a key heritage event celebrating the UAE's rich maritime heritage.

He noted that the festival provides a platform for craftspeople and experienced practitioners to showcase their products and engage directly with visitors, while preserving their stories, expertise, and inherited skills. This helps sustain the relevance of traditional professions within the community and supports the preservation of their cultural and practical value for future generations.

Ahmed Abdullah Baghdad Al Darbaki, from Dibba Al Hisn, said his participation in the 13th edition of the Al Maleh and Fishing Festival involves showcasing and selling a variety of salted and dried fish products. His selection includes Al Qabab, Al Jara, Al Youbal, Al Sahnah, Al Awal, and Al Jashah, alongside other traditional varieties.

Ali Saeed Mohammed Al Rabeh pointed out that his participation includes a diverse selection of

traditional salted fish products, notably Al Kana, Al Qabab, Al Sadr, and Seahorse. He highlighted the festival's role in providing a platform to showcase these products, familiarise visitors with the different varieties and uses of these products, and help younger generations gain a better understanding of the maritime traditions and livelihoods of their fathers and forefathers.

Omar Al Dhahouri, a fisherman from Dibba Al Hisn, reflects on the maritime heritage and the fishing profession, which historically served as a vital source of livelihood for coastal communities.

He explained that traditional fishing practices depended largely on the fisherman's accumulated experience and detailed knowledge of the sea, seasonal patterns, and fish grounds, highlighting the value of traditional expertise passed down through generations.

The festival is open to visitors from 4:00 PM to 10:00 PM, bringing together more than 80 exhibitors, including over 50 productive families, 10 companies specialising in fishing equipment, and around 20 government and private entities.



The Mental Health Challenges Facing CEOs in The Middle East



Dr Kakul Agha

Mental Health and Wellbeing Expert

Contemporary CEOs have been facing mental health issues since long, but due to continued work, the balance between personal and work lives goes haywire. They face multiple challenges on a day-to-day level. This article is the first in the series highlighting issues in the lives of CEOs.

The first challenge is structural isolation. RHR International's CEO Snapshot Survey with Harvard Business Review found that around half of chief executives report loneliness in the role, 61 percent of those say it hinders their performance, and among first-time CEOs the figure approaches 70 percent. The cause is not a thin social calendar. It is candour scarcity. As accountability rises, the number

of people who can give a leader unvarnished feed-back falls to almost none.

Another key challenge is that disclosure carries a price the CEO pays personally. Elyamani and colleagues conducted during 2021, reviewing 27 GCC studies covering 16,391 participants in PLOS One, found low mental health literacy paired with high cumulative stigma, present even among healthcare professionals. A 2023 systematic review in BMC Psychiatry on Arab help-seeking found stigma named as the primary barrier in more than half of its 34 studies, with family and friends consistently preferred over clinicians. A study of 191 primary healthcare physicians in Muscat sharpens it: 57.6 per cent reported depressive episodes, only 21.8 per cent sought professional help, and confidentiality was among the barriers cited. If trained doctors will not use the system, a chief executive whose health is material information for shareholders has less reason still.

Employment status adds a further layer for the many senior executives who are expatriates. Naithani and Jha document that GCC work visas are employer-tied and renewable rather than permanent, with contracts terminable at short notice, producing a standing sense of job insecurity. It is compounded by distance from the family networks the regional literature

shows people turn to instead of clinicians for any sort of help on mental health

All of this rests on a high baseline. The McKinsey Health Institute surveyed 4,000 employees in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the UAE and Qatar and found 66 per cent had experienced at least one mental health challenge, with one in three reporting burnout against one in four globally. PWC Middle East put the regional cost at 37.5 million lost productive days a year, worth around 3.5 billion dollars. The common thread is that each of these challenges penalises admitting to the problem. Until confidential peer forums exist outside the ownership structure, Gulf chief executives will keep managing it alone, which is the condition that produced it. Two caveats worth knowing before you use it. The Naithani and Jha paper on GCC expatriate conditions is from around 2009, so the visa framing predates recent labour reforms in many countries in the region may need updating. And the CEO-specific loneliness data is Western; the ownership-structure and expatriate arguments are reasoned from regional evidence on professionals generally, not measured on Middle Eastern CEOs. Finally, at a very personal level the CEOs need to work on their own mental health, because this race to finish is a marathon, not a sprint.



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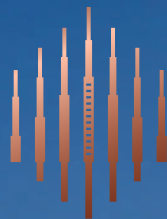
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