

First Abu Dhabi Bank and UAE–India CEPA Council Partner to Empower the Global Ambitions of Indian Start-ups

Mumbai, 20 November 2025: First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB), the UAE’s largest bank and one of the world’s strongest and safest financial institutions, has entered into a strategic partnership with the UAE–India CEPA Council (UICC) to accelerate cross-border entrepreneurship and empower high-potential Indian start-ups to scale globally through the UAE.

The partnership was formalised through the signing of an agreement between. Nimesh Karwanyun, Country CEO - India, First Abu Dhabi Bank and Ahmed Aljneibi, Director of the UAE–India CEPA Council, in the presence of His Excellency Abdalnasser Alshaali, PhD, Ambassador of the UAE to the Republic of India, and Martin Tricaud, Group Head of Wholesale Banking, First Abu Dhabi Bank.

By connecting FAB’s extensive financial and banking capabilities with the CEPA Council’s flagship innovation platform, the partnership activates the innovation and investment pillars of the UAE–India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). It creates a structured pathway for Indian entrepreneurs to access banking services, capital, and supports market-entry as they scale into the UAE’s dynamic and evolving innovation ecosystem.

As part of the partnership, FAB will support the UAE–India Start-Up Series, the UICC’s signature initiative designed to discover and empower India’s most promising early-stage ventures. Since launching in June 2025, the Series has received over 10,000 applications, making it the largest start-up initiative of its kind in India.

Under the agreement, FAB will provide one of the five winning start-ups from the Series with a dedicated soft-landing package in the UAE. This support will include tailored banking solutions, mentorship from FAB sector experts, and facilitated introductions to corporate partners, investors, and regulators. The winning founderwill also gain access to FAB’s cross-border network and relevant incentive programmes designed to support long-term growth.

H.E. Abdalnasser Alshaali, PhD, Ambassador of the UAE to the Republic of India, said:

“The CEPA has transformed the UAE–India partnership into a platform for shared innovation and opportunity. This agreement between FAB and the CEPA Council represents a major step forward in enabling start-ups to scale between our nations. It demonstrates the UAE’s continued commitment to empowering entrepreneurs and deepening capital and technology flows across the CEPA corridor.”

Mr. Nimesh Karwanyun, Country CEO - India, First Abu Dhabi Bank, added:

“The UAE and India share a deep ambition to build globally competitive, innovation-led economies. Through this strategic partnership with the UAE–India CEPA Council, FAB will provide the financial solutions, strategic advisory, and global connectivity that founders require to scale from the UAE to key international markets. It is as a privilege to play a key role in advancing the UAE-India CEPA’s vision for cross-border entrepreneurship and sustainable economic growth.”

Ahmed Aljneibi, Director, UAE–India CEPA Council, commented:

“FAB’s partnership brings tremendous strength to the Start-Up Series and to the wider CEPA innovation corridor. With more than 10,000 applications, this initiative has surfaced one of India’s richest pools of scale-ready ventures. FAB’s financial insights and global networks will provide founders with the practical tools they need to expand internationally with confidence. Together, we are creating a long-term platform that supports founders at every stage of their cross-border journey.”

This collaboration reflects the shared commitment of the UAE and India to foster entrepreneurship and deepen their bilateral innovation corridor. By aligning FAB’s banking capabilities with the CEPA Council’s efforts to elevate the role of start-ups in the UAE-India economic relationship, the partnership will streamline market entry for Indian ventures and broaden access to capital, corporate partners, and regulatory networks.

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About First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB)

Headquartered in Abu Dhabi with a global footprint across 22 markets, FAB is the finance and trade gateway to the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA). With total assets of AED 1.38 trillion (USD 376 billion) as of September-end 2025, FAB is among the world’s largest banking groups. The bank provides financial expertise to its wholesale and retail client franchise across three business units: 1) Investment Banking & Markets, 2) Wholesale Banking, and 3) Personal, Business, Wealth and Privileged Client Banking Group. FAB is listed on the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX) and rated Aa3/AA-/AA- by Moody’s, S&P, and Fitch, respectively, with a stable outlook. On sustainability, FAB holds an MSCI ESG rating of ‘AA’, and is also ranked among the top 6% of banks globally by Refinitiv’s ESG Scores and ranked the Best diversified bank in MENA by Sustainalytics ESG Risk Rating.

For more information, visit: www.bankfab.com. For investor-related queries, please contact the FAB Investor Relations team on ir@bankfab.com

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About the UAE–India CEPA Council (UICC)

The UAE–India CEPA Council (UICC) is a bilateral platform established to advance trade, investment, and innovation under the UAE–India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. It facilitates strategic collaborations between businesses, governments, and institutions across both countries to unlock shared economic opportunities.

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