

## **UAE-India CEPA Council and Banaras Hindu University Sign Partnership Agreement**

**Varanasi, 18 July 2025** – The UAE-India CEPA Council (UICC) and the Atal Incubation Centre - Mahamana Foundation for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Institute of Management, Banaras Hindu University (AIC-MFIE-IM-BHU), co-hosted a Start-up Showcase in Varanasi as part of the UAE-India CEPA Council Start-up Series.

Held in one of India’s most historic and culturally significant cities, the event underscored the UAE-India CEPA Council’s commitment to deepening innovation partnerships with emerging entrepreneurship hubs across the Republic of India.

A key milestone of the event was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the UICC and the AIC-MFIE-IM-BHU. The MoU aims to foster deeper collaboration in innovation and entrepreneurship, with a focus on youth-led ventures and technology-driven enterprises. The agreement is expected to serve as a catalyst for cross-border scaling, knowledge sharing, and institutional linkages between the UAE and India.

Speaking on the occasion of the event, Mr. Ahmed Aljneibi, Director of the UAE-India CEPA Council, stated: “The UAE-India CEPA Start-Up Series is about more than opportunity, it’s about access, ambition, and acceleration. Through this initiative, we are positioning the UAE as an international scale-up launchpad for India’s most promising next-generation ventures, particularly those emerging from Tier 2 and Tier 3 innovation hubs. Our goal is to build bridges that transform local talent into global players.”

Commenting on the partnership, Professor P.V. Rajeev, Director and Professor-in-Charge of the AIC-MFIE-IM-BHU, said: “This collaboration with the UAE-India CEPA Council marks a pivotal moment for our institution and the broader start-up community in Varanasi. By connecting our young innovators with international opportunities, particularly in the UAE, we are opening doors for knowledge exchange, global mentorship, and cross-border scaling. We look forward to building a robust platform that empowers student entrepreneurs to think globally and act boldly.”

As part of the Showcase, participants viewed the official trailer for the UAE-India Start-Up Series, outlining its key offerings including incubation support, fast-track UAE licensing pathways, curated mentorship, and direct access to leading UAE-based investors and innovation networks.

The programme concluded with an engaging Q&A session led by Mr. Aljneibi, providing students, start-up founders, and incubation professionals with an in-depth understanding of the CEPA Start-Up Series and its application process.

The Varanasi Showcase marks a significant step in the UAE’s innovation diplomacy, ensuring that the benefits of the CEPA partnership extend well beyond major metros, reaching India’s cultural heartland and the next generation of entrepreneurial talent.

Start-ups interested in being part of the upcoming flagship pitch event in New Delhi are encouraged to apply via the official microsite. The application window remains open until 31 July 2025.

**Apply now at:** <https://start-upseries.cepacouncil.com>

**For media inquiries or further information, please contact:**  
[info@cepacouncil.com](mailto:info@cepacouncil.com)

### **About the UAE-India CEPA Council**

The UAE-India CEPA Council (UICC) is a dedicated 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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### **About AIC-MFIE-IM-BHU**

The Atal Incubation Centre - Mahamana Foundation for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Institute of Management, Banaras Hindu University (AIC-MFIE-IM-BHU) is a premier incubation and innovation hub established under the Atal Innovation Mission of NITI Aayog, Government of India. Located within the esteemed Banaras Hindu University (BHU), the Centre is dedicated to nurturing entrepreneurial talent and fostering a vibrant start-up ecosystem, particularly among students, researchers, and early-stage innovators. Through mentorship, funding access, and global linkages, the Centre aims to position Varanasi as an emerging node in India's innovation landscape.