



UIBC NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2026



MEMBER ACTIVITY

BHARAT AFRICA SETU

**AN INITIATIVE BY DP WORLD, UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**



Bharat Africa Setu has been conceptualised as a strategic initiative of the Government of India, in partnership with DP World, to address the trade gaps through an integrated, cost-effective, and technology-enabled trade facilitation platform. It takes shape as a result of an overwhelming response to Bharat Mart, a transformative physical trade hub also being set up by DP World at JAFZA, Dubai. **Bharat Mart** is dedicated to Indian exporters for establishing a wholesale & retail marketplace specialising in Indian-made goods for distribution across the UAE, Middle East, Africa, Central Asia, and Europe. This project seeks to bridge the gap between India's burgeoning manufacturing sector and untapped international markets and aligns with Government of India initiatives such as Make in India, ODOP, promotion of MSMEs, among others.

Bharat Africa Setu outreach initiatives, DP World organized a series of sessions (covering key export-oriented locations- Mumbai, Indore, Pune, Gurugram, and Ahmedabad) from 23rd - 27th February 2026. The session provided participants with an overview of the **Bharat Africa Setu initiative** and the Government of India's strategic approach to strengthening trade and economic engagement with the African markets.

The sessions covered key areas including:

- Insights into priority markets and high-potential sectors.
- Guidance on market entry mechanisms, regulatory requirements, and risk mitigation strategies.
- Information on export financing, credit support, institutional facilitation etc.

The participants also had the privilege of interacting with senior leadership from DP World's Sub-Saharan Africa region, including **Mr Mohammed Akoojee**, CEO & Managing Director, Africa; **Mr Hemant Kumar Ruia**, Country Manager, India SCO, and other senior officials from Africa and India.

ABOUT BHARAT AFRICA SETU:

Africa is a high-growth trade and consumption market, importing over **USD 430 billion** annually. India's share currently stands at approximately **USD 28 billion (6.5%)**, indicating significant headroom for expansion. However, Indian exporters, particularly MSMEs, continue to face structural barriers related to logistics, payments, market access, and risk management when engaging with African markets. **The Bharat Africa Setu initiative essentially aims to assist Indian MSMEs in accessing and expanding their presence in the African market.**

GLIMPSES FROM THE EVENT

MUMBAI



(L-R): MR SIDDHARTH SARAF, *Jt. Hon. Treasurer, Bombay Industries Association (BIA)*; **MR B. S. SHETTY**, *Jt. Hon. Secretary, BIA*; **MR ZEESHAN MUKHI**, *Vice President, Freight Forwarding, India SCO, DP World*; **DR. RAJESH DOSHI**, *Vice President, BIA*; **MR MOHAMMED AKOOJEE**, *CEO & MD, Africa, DP World*; **MR HITESH SHAH**, *President, BIA*; **MR WILLIAM SEARS**, *Chief Commercial Officer, Logistics, Africa, DP World*; **MR HITESH SHETTY**, *Immediate Past President, BIA*



MR MOHAMMED AKOOJEE
*CEO & Managing Director, Africa
DP World*

GURUGRAM



(L-R): MR RAVI SOOD, *President, Badli Industrial Estate Association (BIEA)*; **MR WILLIAM SEARS**, *Chief Commercial Officer, Logistics, Africa, DP World*



MR MUKESH KALRA
*Head – Business Development
UAE-India Business Council (UIBC)*

AHMEDABAD



(L-R): MR PRASHANT PATEL, Office Bearer (Gujarat State), Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC); **MR HEMANT KUMAR RUIA**, Country Manager, India SCO, DP World; **MS SHWETA HUNDIA**, Women Wing Chair, Gujarat State, PHD Chamber of Commerce & Industry (PHDCCI); **MR ZEESHAN MUKHI**, Vice President - Freight Forwarding, India SCO, DP World



MR ZEESHAN MUKHI
Vice President - Freight Forwarding, India SCO
DP World

A T T E N D E E S



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

INDIA, UAE TIES DEEPEN AS ABU DHABI CROWN PRINCE ATTENDS AI IMPACT SUMMIT



Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi H.H. Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan paid an official visit to India from February 18 to 19, 2026, to participate in the AI Impact Summit in the national capital, reaffirming the growing strategic partnership between India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

During the visit, the Crown Prince met Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the summit. The two leaders reviewed the progress of the India-UAE Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, underscoring strong political, cultural, commercial, energy and people-to-people ties.

They recalled recent high-level engagements, including visits by UAE President H.H. Sheikh

Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and other members of the royal families of Abu Dhabi and Dubai, highlighting the sustained momentum in bilateral relations.

Both leaders noted significant advancements across key sectors such as defence and security, trade and investment, education and cultural cooperation. Marking four years since the signing of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) on February 18, 2022, they observed that bilateral trade and investment have witnessed remarkable growth under the agreement. [READ MORE](#)

INDIA BUILDING BRIDGES OF TRADE, TRUST AND TRANSFORMATION; SECURES PREFERENTIAL ACCESS TO TWO-THIRDS OF GLOBAL TRADE: UNION MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL



Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Shri Piyush Goyal on 24 February 2026, said that at a time when the world is grappling with uncertainty, India is building “bridges of trade, trust and transformation,” and now enjoys preferential trade access to nearly two-thirds of global trade owing to a series of high-quality free trade agreements (FTAs) concluded under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.

Shri Goyal underlined that all nine FTAs signed under Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi’s leadership have been with

developed economies that complement, rather than compete with, India’s growth journey. The Minister emphasised that no nation could become developed without opening its doors to the global economy, reiterating Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi government’s commitment to reform, perform and transform the Indian economy. [READ MORE](#)

IIT MADRAS GLOBAL TO ESTABLISH ITS FIRST APPLIED AI INNOVATION CENTRE AT DUBAI COMMERCTY



IIT Madras Global Research Foundation will establish its first Applied Artificial Intelligence Innovation Centre at Dubai CommerCity to accelerate applied AI innovation and support technology-led economic growth.

In its first phase, the Centre will host a portfolio of six applied AI startups with a combined valuation of approximately USD 118 million and projected revenues of USD 281 million over the next five years. Several of these companies demonstrate strong potential for scalable global expansion.

Facilitated by MCA Gulf, a strategic partner of IITM Global in Dubai, the Centre aims to

position Dubai as a regional and global launchpad for applied AI innovation, enabling solutions to be developed, deployed and scaled through a long-term platform focused on sustainable innovation and value creation.

Dubai CommerCity is a leading free zone dedicated exclusively to digital commerce in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia (MEASA) region. It serves as a key hub for regional and international brands. [READ MORE](#)

LULU GROUP UNVEILS ITS NEXT PHASE OF GROWTH EVOLUTION 'LULU 2.0', DRIVEN BY TECHNOLOGY, AI, INNOVATION AND OMNICHANNEL RETAIL



LuLu Group, on 02 February 2026, marked a significant milestone in its growth journey with the inauguration of its new Digital and Omnichannel Transformation Office in Dubai, officially launching LuLu 2.0 — the Group's next phase of growth evolution firmly anchored in technology, artificial intelligence, innovation and a fully integrated omnichannel retail ecosystem.

Built on over five decades of customer trust in quality, value and service, 'LuLu 2.0' reflects

the Group's strategic response to changing market dynamics and evolving consumer expectations. The initiative brings together digital platforms, physical retail strength, advanced analytics and AI-driven capabilities to deliver seamless customer experiences across stores, mobile platforms and home delivery.

As the region's number one full-line retailer, LuLu is leveraging its leadership position to shape the future of retail by creating a connected ecosystem where offline and online operate as one powerful omnichannel model.

The newly launched transformation office brings together an exceptional pool of global talent across technology, product innovation, analytics and digital operations, while also nurturing young professionals from UAE universities — building strong long-term digital capabilities within the Group.

A key highlight of LuLu 2.0 is the launch of Agentic Commerce, the first of its kind in the hypermarket segment across the entire MENA region, in partnership with Mastercard. This next-generation AI-powered shopping capability enables intelligent digital agents to assist customers in product discovery, personalised recommendations and secure payments, redefining the future of digital retail experiences. [READ MORE](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS



08-10 April 2026

**Yashobhoomi
New Delhi
INDIA**



18-21 June 2026

**Yashobhoomi
New Delhi
INDIA**



01-03 July 2026

**Chennai Trade Centre
Chennai
INDIA**



01-03 September 2026

**Dubai World Trade Centre
Dubai
UAE**



03-05 November 2026

**Dubai World Trade Centre
Dubai
UAE**



UAE-India Business Council (UIBC) is the only Official Joint Business Chamber set up by both the Governments for promoting economic synergy between the UAE and India. UIBC was formally launched by His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, UAE Minister for Foreign Affairs and Late Smt. Sushma Swaraj, Hon'ble Minister of External Affairs of India during 11th Session of the India-UAE Joint Commission Meeting on September 3, 2015, in New Delhi.

UIBC aims to create an inclusive bilateral trade environment between UAE and India by linking businesses from both the countries and supporting long term commercial partnerships for developing strategic relationships between businesses and government officials from both the countries.

UIBC acts towards promoting investment promotion and business collaborations / JVs between UAE and Indian businesses by organizing B2B networking meetings, policy forums and investment focused events, delegations, and other facilities required to succeed. It serves to provide a voice and visibility to the various stakeholders in UAE-India economic space and work towards promoting trade and investment, job creation, innovation, inclusion, and entrepreneurship between the UAE and India.

UAE-India Business Council (UIBC)

5th Floor, DP World, One Horizon Center
Golf Course Road, DLF Phase V, Sector- 43
Gurugram - 122002, Haryana, India
T: +91-124-4980185
E: office@uipc.org

OUR MISSION

- ❖ To act as a catalyst engaged in exchange of ideas intended to promote the economic synergy between the UAE and India
- ❖ To serve as the direct link between business and government leaders of both the countries
- ❖ To work towards providing the critical first 'home-away-from-home' with a network of Government, Policy Makers, Business Leaders, and Industry contacts supported by highly skilled secretariat
- ❖ Providing a voice and visibility to the various stakeholders in UAE-India economic space
- ❖ To work towards promoting trade and investment, job creation, innovation, inclusion, and entrepreneurship between the UAE and India



[SUBSCRIBE HERE](#)