

REM[^]TIMES

The Premier Publication for **Real Estate** Professionals

June - July 2025

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From the Editor

Dear REM TIMES Readers,

There's something quietly powerful about watching a market mature — not through announcements or headlines, but through the depth of its questions.

This issue of REM TIMES carries that energy. You'll see it in our cover story with **Land Sterling**, where data isn't just a buzzword but a foundation for better decision-making. Their perspective reminds us that in an industry often obsessed with speed, insight is still our greatest asset.

You'll feel it in the pieces that explore wellness-led communities, the rise of data centres, and the growing appetite for AI, climate innovation, and tokenisation. These aren't isolated trends — they're signals of a region in motion, moving from ambition to intentionality.

What ties it all together for me is the people. Whether it's Jason Light and Carlos Piedade from Emirates Insurance bringing fresh perspective to a legacy sector like insurance, or voices from the design world who remind us that space isn't neutral — it reflects the times we live in — each story in this edition feels grounded, intelligent, and necessary.

At a time when hype often drowns out substance, I hope these pages give you pause — and perspective.

Until then,
Happy Reading!



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Senior Editor
REM TIMES



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LAND STERLING



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THE RISE OF RAK: A NEW LUXURY DESTINATION FOR PROPERTY INVESTORS

Ras Al Khaimah is rapidly emerging as the UAE's next luxury real estate hotspot, offering high-end investment opportunities, writes **Artaches Grigorian**, Top Broker, Whitewill Dubai

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BUILT ON TRUST, BOUND BY INTEGRITY

Better Communities is transforming the property management landscape in the UAE by focusing on smart and sustainable solutions that elevate everyday living



Dubai Appoints New Heads for Municipality and Land Department



In a series of senior appointments sanctioned by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, and announced by His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and Chairman of The Executive Council, significant leadership changes have been introduced across multiple government bodies, particularly impacting the MEP and construction industries.

His Excellency Eng. Marwan bin Ghalita has assumed the role of Director General of Dubai Municipality.

A respected figure in engineering circles, he now leads one of Dubai's most critical authorities responsible for regulating construction, setting infrastructure standards, and issuing building permits.

Omar Bu Shehab has been appointed as Director General of the Dubai Land Department and will concurrently serve as Chairman of the Board at the Mohammed Bin Rashid Housing Establishment. These positions closely align him with Dubai's real estate governance and expansive housing programmes, both of which typically involve MEP-heavy developments.

Additional Appointments:

- Dr. Alawi Alsheikh-Ali as Director General of the Dubai Health Authority
- Mohammed Al Shehhi as Acting CEO of the Mohammed Bin Rashid Housing Establishment
- Major General Hareb Mohammed Al Shamsi as Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Dubai Police for Criminal Affairs
- Major General Ahmed Zaal Al Muhairi as Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Dubai Police for Administrative Affairs

These developments signal a strategic evolution in Dubai's governance, with anticipated effects on regulatory frameworks and infrastructure initiatives throughout the emirate.

DLD Achieves Instant Sell-out of Tokenized Real Estate

In a world-first landmark move that reinforces Dubai's leadership in the real estate sector, Dubai Land Department announced that its second tokenized project on the 'PRYPCO Mint' platform was fully funded in a record-breaking one minute and 58 seconds, attracting 149 investors from 35 nationalities.

This unprecedented demand pushed the waiting list to over 10,700 investors, reflecting rising confidence and strong interest in digital real estate ownership solutions across the emirate.

This ongoing success underscores the effectiveness of the platform, which is officially accredited under Dubai Land Department's Property Tokenization Initiative. By enabling investors to purchase shares in ready properties through seamless and cost-effective mechanisms, PRYPCO Mint is setting new standards for market accessibility.

As the platform expands its projects and partnerships, it is helping to shape



a future where tokenized assets are expected to become a central part of Dubai's property market by 2033.

Amid this momentum, Dubai Land Department invites interested individuals to register early and set

up their accounts to take advantage of upcoming offerings before they sell out, unlocking investment opportunities in one of the world's most dynamic and innovative real estate destinations.



Mohamad Al-Dah Appointed as President of Institution of Structural Engineers

The Institution of Structural Engineers (IStructE), London, has announced Mohamad Khodr Al-Dah, FISTructE, CEng, as its 104th President. A seasoned professional with a global footprint in structural engineering, Al-Dah brings over two decades of experience spanning Cairo, Cardiff, London, Seoul, and Dubai, where he currently serves as Director at the Jointly Owned Properties Department, Real Estate Regulatory Agency, Dubai Land Department (DLD).

An Oxford graduate with an MEng in 2002, Al-Dah began his career at Arup UK, contributing to high-profile heritage retrofits such as Unilever House, Peel House, and Nottingham Trent University. His commitment to adaptive reuse underscores his belief in engineering's role in sustainable transformation.

Among his notable achievements is his leadership on the award-winning Expo 2020 Dubai Sunshades project, which earned a 2022 Structural Award for its innovative response to environmental challenges. Joining the DLD in 2009, Al-Dah founded the Real

Estate Appraisal Centre and authored the Emirates Book Valuation Standards in 2010. He also facilitated the landmark 2019 MoU between IStructE and the Dubai Land Department.

As IStructE President, Al-Dah has outlined three core themes: reducing embodied carbon in structural design, fostering cross-sector partnerships, and advancing mentoring and equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within the profession. He is the first Emirati and Arab to hold this position in the organisation's 117-year history.

FROM VISION_{TO} VALUE

Guiding the Property Lifecycle with

LAND STERLING

“Clients today need more than numbers; they need guidance. Our strength lies in giving a perspective that’s grounded, timely, and forward-looking.”

With integration, insight, and perspective at its core, Land Sterling is redefining what it means to advise in a changing market.

The role of real estate consultants has evolved. Today’s clients expect more than services or reports. They expect context, interpretation, and clarity from partners who understand not only the value of data but also how it informs the broader picture. Land Sterling is one of those partners.

The company has steadily evolved from a specialist consultancy into a multidisciplinary company offering end-to-end advisory across the real estate lifecycle. What has remained constant throughout its journey is a simple principle: strategy should lead, and every insight must serve a decision.

“Our role is to make sense of complexity,” says **Said El Haouasli, CEO of Land Sterling**. “Clients today need more than numbers; they need guidance. Our strength lies in giving a perspective that’s grounded, timely, and forward-looking.”

From Services to Strategy

Land Sterling’s growth has been shaped by its ability to align expertise across multiple disciplines. These include valuation, project and cost consultancy, investment advisory, building consultancy, and facilities management, among others. What makes this integration valuable is not simply the scale of services but the consistency in how they support strategic outcomes.

Each mandate, whether it involves due diligence, technical audits, lifecycle cost modelling, or investment planning, is approached through a forward-looking lens. Clients are supported not just at a single point in time but across the entire continuum of their real estate decision-making.

This approach has proven especially relevant in a region marked by rapid development, evolving investor priorities, and regulatory change. By linking technical depth with strategic clarity, Land Sterling positions itself as a long-term partner rather than a transactional service provider.

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RICS
Certified Team

\$36B
In Projects Valued

10+
Countries Served

Enabling Smarter Decisions Through Technology

As the real estate sector becomes increasingly data-driven, Land Sterling continues to enhance its digital capabilities to improve accuracy, efficiency, and value across its advisory work. Its use of technology is purposeful, with a focus on tools that inform, visualise, and support better client outcomes.

Through its in-house drone services, delivered via GIS Drone, Land Sterling provides advanced capabilities

including aerial inspection, surveying and mapping, and 3D modelling and visualisation. These services support a wide range of projects, from early-stage site analysis to detailed asset assessments, contributing to more informed planning and decision-making.

Digital tools are now an integral part of Land Sterling's operations. They provide more timely and precise insights that respond to evolving client expectations. The firm remains committed to adopting solutions that enhance performance, reduce risk, and deliver measurable outcomes.



Said El Haouasli
CEO, Land Sterling



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Leading with Perspective

At the core of Land Sterling's progress are its people: a team of experienced professionals, from RICS-certified valuers to engineers, planners, and advisory specialists. Their value lies not just in their credentials but in their ability to think broadly and advise practically.

Land Sterling has also invested significantly in building a culture of learning and collaboration, ensuring that its teams stay connected to market trends, regional dynamics, and global standards. Leadership is understood to be a shared responsibility, not a top-down directive.

This commitment to shared leadership and continuous learning has created an environment where diverse expertise comes together to shape well-rounded advice. It's not just about individual excellence but about how teams collaborate to connect technical knowledge with client needs. This cohesion is what enables Land Sterling to deliver advice that is both insightful and actionable, in real-world understanding and aligned with evolving market expectations.

Positioned for Progress: Land Sterling and Dubai's Vision 2033

As Dubai advances toward its Vision 2033 targets, aiming to double the size of its economy, lead the digital transition, and enhance urban liveability, real estate is expected to play a foundational role in enabling this growth.

Land Sterling's integrated advisory model and focus on data-backed insight align closely with these national priorities. From supporting investment decisions and project feasibility to enabling technology-driven site assessments, the company contributes to shaping a built environment that reflects Dubai's economic,





As the real estate landscape becomes more data-driven, Land Sterling continues to strengthen its digital capabilities to support greater accuracy, efficiency, and value across its advisory work.

environmental, and social ambitions.

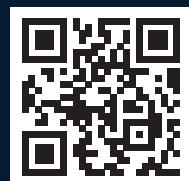
Its presence across key sectors, combined with its advisory role in some of the region's most ambitious mega projects, reinforces its position as a trusted partner in a rapidly evolving urban landscape.

Looking Ahead

While Land Sterling's Foundations are deep, its focus remains on the future. From adopting advanced data analytics for investment insights to strengthening ESG advisory capabilities, the firm is helping shape the consultancy model of tomorrow.

Strategic expansions, new service lines, and a continued commitment to professional excellence are central to its next chapter. Yet through all this growth, the principle remains the same: to deliver real value, through real expertise, with real integrity.

The company's capabilities are further reinforced by its regulated oversight by leading market bodies, including the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and International Valuation Standards (IVS), both respected benchmarks of quality and integrity in the global property sector.



landsterling.com

Oscar-Winner Adrien Brody Attends Mr. Eight Launch in Dubai Islands



European real estate developer Mr. Eight Development has sold over 60% of the units at its latest Dubai Islands project, Villa del GAVI. The stunning waterfront development was officially unveiled at an exclusive event at Atlantis The Royal, attracting an elite crowd of celebrities, influencers, investors and industry insiders. Among the distinguished guests was Academy Award-winning actor Adrien Brody, who participated in the ribbon-cutting ceremony. Brody's presence brought international attention and artistic depth to the event.

WHAT'S HOT

- Prices starting at **AED 3.6 million**
- Flexible **35/65** payment plan
- Handover scheduled for **Q4 2027**



Taj Wellington Mews Debuts on Al Marjan Island



Indian Hotels Company (IHCL) debuted Taj Wellington Mews on the picturesque Al Marjan Island, Ras Al-Khaimah in partnership with luxury real estate developer BNW Developments. The property witnessed 97 of its units reserved within the first 24 hours of its launch, making it among the UAE's fastest-selling luxury projects to date.

The grand unveiling night at the World Trade Center, Dubai was hosted by Kris Fade of 'Dubai Bling' fame and welcomed top industry experts from the UAE real estate landscape and over 60 elite broker agencies. Ankur Aggarwal, Chairman and Founder of BNW Developments, and Dr. Vivek Anand Oberoi, Managing Director and Co-founder, lifted the drapes on a visionary partnership between Taj and BNW.

WHAT'S HOT

- Prices starting at **AED 1.5 million**
- Payment plan: **10% on booking, 60% in flexible installments** over three years, and 30% on completion
- Handover scheduled for **Q4 2027**



BT Properties Presents Flagship Project - WAADA



BT Properties recently unveiled its flagship development project 'WAADA,' a master-planned community in the UAE during a launch event held at the Grand Hyatt, Dubai Healthcare City. Situated in Dubai South, minutes from Al Maktoum International Airport and the Expo 2020 Legacy District, 'WAADA' will be an exquisite development that integrates architecture, sustainability, and livability. The project aligns closely with the objectives of the Dubai 2040 Urban Master Plan, offering a forward-thinking approach to urban development.

WHAT'S HOT

- Prices starting from **AED 460,000**
- Sizes ranging from **752 sq ft to 4,567 sq ft**
- Flexible payment plans available
- Project to be handed over in **Q3 2028**

Gulf House Real Estate Launches Olaia Residences



Gulf House Real Estate recently announced the launch of its first signature development, Olaia Residences, a residential project set in the heart of Palm Jumeirah. Leading UAE brokerage firm, Metropolitan Premium Properties, is the exclusive sales and marketing partner for the project.

"Olaia is more than just a residence; it's a living statement, a symbol of elevated living and personal distinction," said Eng. Mohammed Mana Sultan Aballala, Founder and Chairman of Gulf House Real Estate. "At Gulf House, we believe exceptional living goes beyond aesthetics which means our developments are designed to deliver personalized service, attention to detail and a seamless experience from purchase through to post-handover care."

Blending architectural brilliance with refined elegance, Olaia Residences offers a limited collection of bespoke duplexes and luxury apartments, crafted to deliver an extraordinary lifestyle where opulence meets serenity. State-of-the-art amenities will include indoor and outdoor pools (rooftop), a wellness center, a mini-golf, 24/7 security and concierge services.

WHAT'S HOT

- Prices starting at **AED 3.2 million**
- Sizes ranging from **2,200 sq ft up to 4,000 sq ft**
- **50/50 payment with 10% booking fee**
- Project handover expected for **Q4 2027**

Ohana Developments Unveils \$1.3b Luxury Beachfront Project at Al Jurf



Ohana Development has launched Jacob & Co. Beachfront Living by Ohana in partnership with luxury timepiece and jewellery house Jacob & Co. Located in Al Jurf between Dubai and Abu Dhabi, this USD 1.3 billion development blends natural surroundings with exceptional artistry and craftsmanship.

Jacob & Co. Beachfront Living by Ohana presents 457 residences comprising sea-view apartments, villas, penthouses, Sky Mansions, and beachfront mansions—each capturing the spirit of refined coastal living. Penthouses, starting from USD 6 million, feature 180-degree vistas and expansive interiors, while Sky Mansions, starting from USD 21 million, offer 360-degree panoramic views and private dedicated elevators.

Customisable 3- to 6-bedroom villas and mansions—each with a private pool—are available with natural reserve or canal-front views, while Beachfront Mansions deliver unparalleled space and uninterrupted sea view.



WHAT'S HOT

- Prices starting at **AED 1.5 million**
- **70/30** payment plan
- Completion scheduled for **Q2 2028**

AMIS Development Launches AED 100m Project Woodland Crest



Luxury real estate builder AMIS Development has launched Woodland Crest, an AED 100 million located in the heart of Meydan Avenue in Dubai. With handover scheduled for the second quarter of 2027, the project promises to elevate upscale living in one of the city's most sought-after locations.

Located four kilometers from Downtown Dubai, the development is five minutes from Meydan Racecourse, 12 minutes from Dubai Hills Mall, Burj

Khalifa, Downtown Dubai, the Museum of the Future and DIFC, 15 minutes from Dubai Healthcare City, and 20 minutes from Dubai International Airport. Woodland Crest features luxury units with a variety of layouts, including 1- and 2-bedroom apartments, designed with modern elegance and timeless appeal. Each unit is built with intuitive design, eco-friendly materials, and cutting-edge smart home technology.

WHAT'S HOT

- Prices starting **AED 1.4 million**
- **75/25** payment plan tied to construction milestones
- Handover scheduled for **Q7 2027**

Amirah Developments Presents Bonds Avenue



Amirah Developments, a Dubai-based real estate developer, today unveils its maiden project, Bonds Avenue, a high-quality residential development poised to redefine luxury living on the newly master-planned Dubai Islands.

With unit sizes ranging from 810 to 4,416 square feet, and starting prices from Dh1.63 million to AED 9.95 million,

each home is crafted to deliver spacious layouts, elegant finishes, and an elevated lifestyle experience. Strategically located on Dubai Islands, Bonds Avenue offers unparalleled accessibility as well as the best waterfront living with unlimited view of the Arabian Gulf, being just minutes away from key landmarks such as the Gold Souq Metro Station, ten minutes



away from Dubai International Airport, Downtown Dubai, and Business Bay. The development is well-connected via major highways and public transport options, ensuring residents have easy access to top attractions, schools, hospitals, shopping centres, and entertainment hubs.

Residents will enjoy panoramic views of over 21 kilometres of pristine beaches and crystal-clear waters, perfect for yachting and water sports. The community is enriched with world-class hospitality in luxurious resorts and embraces a sustainable lifestyle with eco-friendly infrastructure and green spaces.

WHAT'S HOT

- Unit sizes ranging from **810 to 4,416 square feet**
- Starting prices from **AED 1.63 million**
- 20% on booking, 40% during construction in scheduled instalments, and 40% on completion
- Completion scheduled for **January 2027**

AMWAJ Development Unveils Gate Eleven Residences



AMWAJ Development, a rising force in Dubai's high-end real estate landscape, introduces its most ambitious project to date: Gate Eleven Residences, located in the prestigious MBR

District 11, Meydan. Following the success of Starlight Park and The Cube Residences, this third project reinforces AMWAJ's commitment to design-led innovation and sustainable community development.



Positioned near Downtown Dubai, the Dubai Mall, and Dubai International Airport, Gate Eleven combines tranquility and accessibility with direct connectivity to Al Ain Road. Overlooking serene lagoons and lush parklands, it offers a harmonious lifestyle at the intersection of convenience and calm.

Designed for modern lifestyles, the development features a curated mix of one- and two-bedroom apartments across a low-rise six-floor layout. Each unit includes expansive floorplans, high-quality finishes, and integrated smart home systems for climate, lighting, and security control.

WHAT'S HOT

- Prices starting from **AED 1.2 million**
- **50/50** payment plan with 50% due on handover
- Completion expected in **Q4 2027**

Wellness is the New Luxury: How Dubai's Real Estate is Evolving Around Wellbeing

REM TIMES talks to experts on why wellness-focused communities that prioritise health, sustainability and holistic living are taking centrestage in Dubai's real estate market

Deepa Natarajan Lobo

Rosa Piro



In the fast-moving world of Dubai's real estate, a new blueprint for the future is emerging—one centered not on square footage or skyline views, but on wellness. Once seen as an add-on or a luxury reserved for ultra-high-net-worth buyers, wellness is now becoming a mainstream priority, redefining what homebuyers value in both residential and community living.

Across the city, developers and brokers alike are responding to this shift, creating communities that integrate health, sustainability, and purposeful design. With global lifestyle changes triggered by the pandemic and a

Parag Parekh Kumar



growing awareness of the link between environment and well-being, wellness real estate is no longer niche—it's becoming the standard.

"We're seeing a fundamental shift in what homebuyers prioritise," says **Rosa Piro, Senior Business Development Director and Head of Research at Arada**. "Wellness is no longer a luxury—it's now a key factor for a broad spectrum of buyers, including middle-income families."

Arada, one of the UAE's fastest-growing developers, is betting big on wellness. The company has embedded health-focused living into every aspect



of its planning—from walkable master plans and green spaces to amenities that enhance both physical and mental well-being. A testament to this commitment is Arada's AED1 billion wellness and fitness division, which includes four brands and 15 gyms and studios across Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Sharjah, already serving over 30,000 members.

Piro adds, "We believe wellness real estate will shape the future of how and where we live. We're preparing to lead this space with both a landmark ultra-luxury wellness development and a large-scale community built entirely around wellness-focused living."

This trend isn't just developer-led; it's being driven by what brokers are hearing directly from buyers. According to **Parag Parekh Kumar, Founder and CEO of Property Pro**, demand for

wellness communities has skyrocketed in recent years. "This trend comes from a greater focus on health and well-being, especially post-pandemic," says Kumar. "Buyers now want communities that actively support a healthy lifestyle—with gyms, walking paths, in-house doctors, wellness retreats, and even weekly farmers' markets."

Kumar notes that families with pre-existing medical conditions are particularly drawn to wellness-oriented communities due to the positive impact on recovery and daily quality of life. Mental health, access to healthcare, and stronger social connections are now part of the homebuying conversation, alongside price and location. "People are also looking for eco-friendly materials and sustainable designs," he adds. "These communities are more than homes—they're environments that promote

active, connected, and conscious lifestyles."

From a broker's perspective, this evolution is also reshaping the definition of value in real estate. While amenities such as swimming pools and gyms were once optional extras, they are now central to what makes a community desirable. Wellness is no longer a perk—it's a priority, believes **Zorro Ghura, Associate Director, Aqua Properties**, who says buyers in Dubai are gravitating toward wellness-focused developments not just for what they offer today, but for how they support long-term wellbeing. "The COVID-19 pandemic heightened awareness of the importance of a balanced lifestyle," says Zorro. "Wellness communities now appeal not only for their fitness centers, spas, and green spaces, but also for their energy-efficient designs and mental wellness programs."

"Wellness is no longer a luxury—it's now a key factor for a broad spectrum of buyers, including middle-income families."

Rosa Piro

Senior Business Development
Director and Head of
Research at Arada



“Buyers now want communities that actively support a healthy lifestyle—with gyms, walking paths, in-house doctors, wellness retreats, and even weekly farmers’ markets.”

Parag Parekh Kumar

Founder and CEO of Property Pro



Zorro Ghura



Remote work has also played a key role in this shift. Homebuyers are seeking environments that blend productivity and relaxation, with dedicated wellness zones, meditation rooms, and natural light becoming increasingly common in new projects.

Developments with cycling tracks, yoga studios, and nature trails are no longer reserved for the luxury market—they’re entering the mainstream. That said, there’s a definite premium aura to these communities, particularly in how they align with global lifestyle trends. “These communities offer a holistic living

experience and are seen as long-term investments in both health and property value,” Zorro adds.

As Dubai continues to grow as a global hub, wellness real estate is poised to play a central role in shaping its future. Whether it’s through cutting-edge amenities, community integration, or sustainable infrastructure, the city is laying the groundwork for a new kind of urban living—one that nurtures body, mind, and environment alike.

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‘We Want to be at the Forefront of UAE’s Real Estate Development’

Jason Light, CEO, and Carlos Piedade, Head of Digital Strategy and Transformation, Emirates Insurance Company, share how the insurer is embracing digital transformation, regulatory agility, and tailored solutions to lead the UAE’s evolving insurance landscape

Photos by Sumit Shivanandhan



As the UAE continues its trajectory as a global business and innovation hub, its insurance sector is evolving rapidly to keep pace with economic diversification, infrastructure growth, and digital transformation. At the forefront of this evolution is Emirates Insurance Company (EIC), one of the region’s most trusted and agile insurers.

Jason Light, CEO, and Carlos Piedade, Head of Strategy and Digital Transformation, Emirates Insurance Company, share insights on the drivers behind the UAE’s insurance market boom, how EIC is leveraging emerging technologies to stay competitive, and the company’s strategy to meet the growing

needs of real estate developers, high-net-worth individuals, and a rapidly expanding expat population. From regulatory shifts to insurtech integration, Jason offers a forward-looking view of what it takes to lead in a fast-changing landscape.

The UAE’s insurance market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 2.07% from 2024 to 2029, reaching a market volume of US\$10.46 billion. What do you think are the reasons for this boom?

It is indeed an exciting time to be part of the booming insurance industry in

the UAE and some of the fundamental reasons behind the growth, I believe is due to a combination of key factors:

1. **Development and investment by the UAE Government** in enhancing its infrastructure for instance, major projects such as Etihad rail and hyper loop project which are set to boost economic growth and allow residents and visitors to get around the country and across GCC more easily. This boosts the demand for insurance cover as these projects will need engineering insurance, professional indemnity insurance and once completed will require property and liability insurances.

2. **The regulatory framework** is constantly evolving as the UAE economy grows and has resulted in the mandatory requirement for health insurance in the Northern Emirates, which will increase the need for health insurance policies. The mandatory requirement of having health insurance for individuals when renewing their visas in Dubai and Abu Dhabi is supporting the growth of health insurance.
3. **Population growth** as UAE attracts more foreign expats into the region with its world-class facilities and low crime rates, the need for personal insurance such as car/home insurance will grow as well as the implementation of the Unemployment Insurance Scheme two years ago has further fuelled the need for insurance protection.

How does Emirates Insurance assess and prioritise new market opportunities within the UAE and beyond?

EIC is keen to grow and position themselves as a leading insurer in the UAE, to maintain this position one must be agile and adapt to change which is always constant. When assessing and prioritising new market opportunities there are several denominators to consider including:

1. **Market demand** – The need for a particular line of insurance through regulatory changes, consumer needs and preferences, the actual market size and growth potential.
2. **Regulatory environment** – The licencing and capital requirements as well as relevant approvals to operate needs to be carefully reviewed if entering a new market outside of the UAE.
3. **Competition-positioning** in a highly competitive UAE insurance market – This can be done through

product innovation and having digital platforms where customers can buy policies online or through a mobile app are paramount in an evolving digital economy.

4. **Financial viability** - The opportunity must create shareholder value ensuring our underwriting practices and pricing models yield strong technical profits as well as a high return on investment.

How does the company incorporate emerging technologies (e.g., AI, machine learning, blockchain) into its operations?

EIC is accelerating its technology transformation to reshape the way we operate, serve, and grow.

We're building the next generation of digital capabilities to streamline our internal processes, enhance the experience for our customers and brokers, and unlock new levels of operational efficiency.

Our vision is bold: we're investing in end-to-end digital platforms, AI and machine learning-powered solutions, and modern operational systems that will enable seamless, omni-channel engagement across all lines of business—from client onboarding to claims, renewals, and beyond. These platforms will not only transform how we work internally but also strengthen our ability to connect with external partners and ecosystems, positioning EIC as a digitally integrated player in the market.

At the heart of this

transformation is data. We're embedding advanced analytics and intelligent automation into our core operations to enable data-driven underwriting, pricing, and portfolio optimization—driving both profitability and sustainable growth.

And none of this would be possible without our people. In 2024, we welcomed top-tier talent specialized in insurance, digital strategy and transformation, bringing the expertise and vision needed to lead us into the future. Their contributions are essential as we move away from legacy systems and embrace cutting-edge technologies that will redefine how we deliver value.

Our path forward is clear: we will adopt a phased digital transformation strategy, enabling us to scale effectively, manage risk, and realize long-term efficiencies without the disruption of a full system overhaul.

The journey is underway—and the momentum is real.

How does Emirates Insurance stay agile in its operations, particularly when responding to shifts in market conditions or changes in regulatory requirements?

We have launched a new Digital Program which is a



Jason Light

cornerstone of this agility. By modernizing our platforms and embedding end-to-end digital capabilities across the business, we're not only improving efficiency and customer experience—we're also building the flexibility needed to respond rapidly to changing market conditions and evolving regulatory requirements.

We've adopted a phased implementation approach that allows us to introduce enhancements iteratively, learn from each stage, and adapt based on market signals or compliance needs—without disrupting day-to-day operations.

Agility is also embedded in our governance framework. The Digital Program operates under strict oversight, with well-defined controls that align business, technology, and regulatory stakeholders. This ensures that changes—whether regulatory-driven or market-led—are quickly assessed, prioritized, and actioned with full transparency and accountability.

Our investment in data, AI, and cloud-based platforms further enhances our responsiveness. These tools will allow us to track performance in near real time, model risk and pricing more dynamically, and scale solutions across channels and business lines quickly and securely.

Through this combination of future-ready technology, disciplined execution, and empowered teams, Emirates Insurance is now starting to position itself as a truly agile insurer. The Foundations are now being built so that we can start realising key benefits already by the end of 2025.

With the rapid growth of the UAE's real estate sector, how does Emirates Insurance tailor its offerings to meet the unique insurance needs of real estate developers, property investors, and homeowners?

In recent years, the real estate landscape in the UAE has evolved profoundly, we want to be at the forefront of this development by providing insurance solutions from design and consulting stage to construction as well as post-handover.

We provide turnkey solutions by providing comprehensive engineering, liability and professional indemnity



Carlos Piedade

insurance catered for real estate developers at design stage right through to construction stage.

Post handover, with the rise of jointly owned properties, such as apartment complexes and commercial buildings has created a need for specialized insurance solutions. Emirates Insurance Company (EIC) has emerged as a leader in providing Jointly Owned Properties (STRATA) insurance in Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

For homeowners particularly the influx of affluent individuals moving to the UAE due to its favourable tax rates and excellent infrastructure, we provide insurance solutions for high-net-worth individuals covering their villas, personal contents and jewellery as well as fine art and high value vehicles under our high net worth motor proposition.

Given the rapid pace of economic development in the UAE and broader GCC region, what key industry trends do you see shaping the insurance landscape in the next three to five years?

The insurance sector in the UAE and wider GCC is set for dynamic change over the next three to five years. Economic diversification, digitalisation,

and regulatory reform are driving momentum.

- Demand for **cyber insurance** is rising sharply due to increased digital risk exposure across government and private sectors.
- Growth in **strata insurance** is expected, fuelled by continued real estate development and regulatory enforcement in jointly owned communities.
- The **high net worth (HNW)** segment will expand as the region attracts affluent expatriates and invests in luxury real estate, yachts, and collectibles, driving bespoke personal lines.
- Simultaneously, **IFRS 17 adoption will transform how insurers report profitability** resulting in changes in pricing strategies.
- Mandatory health and unemployment insurance, and ESG-linked initiatives are reshaping compliance and product design.
- Insurers will increasingly adopt **AI, data analytics**, and digital distribution to remain competitive. Insurtech collaborations, particularly in claims automation and embedded insurance, will become vital.

As smaller players face capital and tech challenges, market consolidation and demand for specialist underwriting talent will intensify.

TORONTO BREAKS GROUND ON NET-ZERO COMMUNITY CENTRE IN NORTH YORK

The first of many to come, the centre will include pools, science labs, art and dance studios, a gym and a child-care centre



Toronto has broken ground on what it says is one of its first net-zero emissions community centres in North York, an aquatic and child-care space set to open in 2028. Located at 60 Starview Lane, the Western North York Community Centre is expected to span 80,000 square feet and be a 100 per cent electric building not powered by fossil fuels, but on-site solar panels on the roof and over the parking lot.

The centre will be built with low carbon concrete, with a system that draws water from underground to heat and cool the building, an advanced

stormwater management system, according to the city. "Having a net-zero energy facility is something all residents can be proud of," Mayor Olivia Chow said in a release.

The city says the centre will include amenities such as pools, science labs, art and dance studios and a gym, as well as a child-care centre designed to accommodate up to 62 children. "Following three years of community consultation, I'm excited to see us break ground on an enhanced recreation and child care centre to better connect our diverse and growing communities. From

children to seniors, this centre can be a recreational hub for everyone," said Councillor Anthony Perruzza in the news release.

The centre will replace the existing Carmine Stefano Community Centre, which will remain open until the new centre is operational, the city release says. Speaking at the groundbreaking event, the mayor said she's committed to building strong and caring communities. "We're investing in well-being by building and enhancing space that creates greater social connection," she said.

Valuing Data Centres: Insights into the Digital Infrastructure Revolution

Abhinav Sharma, Partner at Reliant Surveyors, believes that data centres play a critical role in shaping the digital future

In the era of rapid digital transformation, data has become the currency of innovation, driving commerce, connectivity, and technological breakthroughs. At the core of this revolution are data centres—advanced real estate infrastructures that store, process, and disseminate vast volumes of information. The valuation of data centres is now a critical exercise, reflecting their strategic significance in the global economy and their pivotal role in shaping the digital future.

Global Data Centre Landscape: Powering the Digital Age

The global data centre ecosystem is vast, comprising approximately 8,000 physical facilities as of 2022, according to the U.S. International Trade Commission (USITC). These facilities form the backbone of modern technology, supporting cloud computing, artificial intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT) devices, and beyond. Their impact extends beyond tech innovation—they have become indispensable economic assets.

Valuing data centres involves a nuanced integration of real estate, technology, and business considerations. Several approaches are commonly utilised:

- 1. Income Approach:** This method focuses on the revenue potential and operating expenses of the data centre. Key steps include analysing lease agreements (e.g., colocation revenue), forecasting income from managed services,

estimating operating costs, and applying appropriate discount rates to calculate the Net Present Value (NPV). Metrics such as Power Usage Effectiveness (PUE), tenant churn, and occupancy rates are critical.

Source: Deloitte. (2021). Valuing Digital Infrastructure: Data Centres

- 2. Market Approach:** This relies on comparable transactions by identifying similar data centre sales

and adjusting for factors like location, age, capacity, and technology. This method often faces challenges due to the lack of transparency in private sales.

Source: CBRE. (2023). Global Data Centre Report

- 3. Cost Approach:** Focused on replacement costs, this method calculates the cost of land acquisition, construction, IT





hardware, and software while subtracting depreciation based on usage and obsolescence. This approach is particularly relevant in emerging markets.

Source: Turner & Townsend. (2022). International Construction Costs

Market Growth and Regional Trends

The global data centre market, valued at \$249 billion in 2023, is expected to soar to \$399 billion by 2029. Hyperscale data centres, designed for scalable applications, are leading this growth with a remarkable compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 27.9%. By 2032, this segment alone is forecasted to exceed \$935 billion.

The capacity of these centres is anticipated to reach 171-219 gigawatts (GW) by 2030, driven by increasing demand for efficient, sustainable, and scalable infrastructure. The GCC region is emerging as a significant player, with a projected market size of \$5.3 billion by 2031 and a CAGR of 8.8%. Among GCC nations, the UAE is at the forefront, leveraging its strategic location, cutting-edge infrastructure, and government-backed initiatives to attract global investments.

As this growth takes place, the data centre markets differ regionally, each shaped by unique characteristics that influence the development and valuation of data centres.

North America: A mature market with high colocation demand, dominated by tech hubs like Silicon Valley.

Europe: Compliance with green energy initiatives such as EU taxonomy influences valuations. Key markets include London, Frankfurt, Amsterdam, Paris, and Dublin (FLAP-D).

Asia-Pacific: Growth is fueled by cloud adoption and mobile internet, with emerging markets like India and Vietnam showing promise.

Middle East & Africa: Hyperscale data centre investments are growing, driven by renewable energy solutions to reduce cooling costs.

While these regions exhibit diverse growth patterns, valuing data centres presents several challenges due to high capital requirements for construction and maintenance, which demand substantial investments. Additionally, their high energy consumption necessitates sustainable solutions to manage costs, while navigating global and local regulations adds layers of compliance complexity. Moreover, the rapid pace of technological advancements can lead to obsolescence, impacting long-term valuations and requiring continuous upgrades to maintain their competitive edge.

UAE: A Regional Leader in the Data Centre Market

The UAE has positioned itself as a leader in the GCC's data centre market, spearheading regional growth with

strategic initiatives. Dubai, in particular, has emerged as a global technology hub, leveraging its connectivity, advanced infrastructure, and pro-business policies.

The UAE's data centre growth is driven by key differentiators, including a strong commitment to sustainability with initiatives like solar-powered data centres, which highlight the nation's focus on renewable energy and environmental stewardship. Strategic investments in workforce development and renewable energy further enhance the value of local data centres.

Additionally, the UAE's strategic geographic location as a gateway between East and West positions it as a preferred hub for global tech firms. These factors have attracted significant international investment, driving economic growth and reinforcing the UAE's leadership in digital infrastructure. Thus, as the global economy increasingly relies on digital infrastructure, data centres have become indispensable pillars of growth. The UAE, with its forward-thinking policies, advanced infrastructure, and focus on sustainability, stands out as a beacon of innovation in the GCC. For investors and stakeholders, the UAE presents a unique opportunity to tap into a rapidly expanding market driven by a blend of technological advancement and economic foresight. By focusing on scalable, efficient, and green solutions, the UAE is setting new benchmarks for the valuation and growth of data centres in the digital age.

UKRAINE – THE MOST UNEXPECTED YET ATTRACTIVE INVESTMENT DESTINATION?

Olena Shtohryn, Founder and Managing Partner, Dictio, Attorney-at-Law and Mediator, writes about how Ukraine, despite ongoing challenges, is emerging as a strategic investment destination driven by reconstruction, reform, and international support



In a world where investors often gravitate toward predictability and stability, the most transformative opportunities frequently emerge from less expected places. Ukraine, despite its ongoing challenges, is rapidly positioning itself as one of the most compelling investment destinations globally — especially for those with a long-term strategic vision.

Since the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion in 2022, Ukraine has faced devastating losses. However, these hardships have also opened a rare window for comprehensive renewal. The World Bank and European Commission estimate Ukraine's reconstruction needs at over \$524 billion, making it the largest rebuilding effort in Europe since World War II.

Unlike conventional post-war recoveries, Ukraine's trajectory focuses not just on replacing what was lost, but on building modern, sustainable, and resilient infrastructure. It is an opportunity to reinvent urban environments, industry, and public services using the latest global standards.

As an investment lawyer and mediator with two decades of experience supporting international investors, I view Ukraine not through the

lens of war, but as a country standing on the threshold of an economic renaissance.

Real Estate and Infrastructure: Key Drivers of Growth

The reconstruction of Ukraine places real estate and infrastructure at the center of the country's future growth. Several trends make these sectors particularly attractive:

Housing Demand Surge: With millions of Ukrainians displaced, the demand for new, energy-efficient housing is expected to soar as they return.

Industrial and Logistics Expansion: Ukraine's strategic position between Europe and Asia positions it as a future hub for trade, manufacturing, and logistics.

Green Development: EU accession aspirations drive the country to align with strict sustainability standards, creating strong demand for eco-friendly construction.

Social Infrastructure Rebuilding: Schools, hospitals, and administrative buildings require reconstruction, offering opportunities in public-private partnerships (PPPs). Moreover, Ukraine has been accelerating regulatory

reforms, streamlining permitting processes, digitizing land registries, and promoting platforms like DREAM and Prozorro.Sale to enhance transparency and efficiency.

Risk Management and Investment Protection

The situation in Ukraine remains complex, but it is important to distinguish between generalized perception and grounded assessment. Large parts of Ukraine — particularly in the west and center — remain operational, stable, and increasingly attractive for business activity. Kyiv, Lviv for example, are experiencing notable growth in sectors such as IT, logistics, and manufacturing. Crucially, Ukraine is not alone. A network of international financial institutions offers support and protection mechanisms for investors:

- MIGA (Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency) provides political risk insurance.
- EBRD and DFC offer blended finance models that combine grants with private investments.
- Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs) with EU countries, the United States, and others provide for international arbitration and protection of investor

rights. These mechanisms ensure that while the risks are real, they are actively managed and mitigated.

Ukraine Facility: The Game-Changer for Investment Climate

A significant turning point in Ukraine's investment environment is the establishment of the Ukraine Facility, a dedicated €50 billion support program launched by the European Union for the period 2024–2027. The Ukraine Facility offers:

- Macro-financial assistance to stabilize the Ukrainian economy and ensure currency and fiscal stability.
- Reform incentives linked to transparency, rule of law, anti-corruption measures, and improvements in the business environment.
- A guaranteed mechanism that aims to leverage private sector investments in Ukraine's reconstruction efforts, reducing financial exposure for international investors. In essence, the Ukraine Facility not only underpins macroeconomic stability but also

enhances the structural environment necessary for sustainable private investment.

It sends a clear signal: Ukraine is not a short-term humanitarian project; it is a long-term investment opportunity with institutional support from the world's largest economic bloc.

U.S.–Ukraine Reconstruction Investment Fund

An agreement was recently signed between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Ukraine to mobilize investment for Ukraine's post-war recovery, stimulate the economy, modernize infrastructure, and develop the private sector. The fund acts as both a catalyst for foreign direct investment (FDI) and a bridge for U.S. businesses seeking strategic opportunities in one of Europe's largest and most dynamic emerging markets.

Moreover, European investors — particularly those from Poland and neighboring EU countries — enjoy geographic proximity, cultural affinity, and an advantageous logistical position to engage with Ukrainian markets. Cross-

border initiatives and EU Neighborhood Programs further ease market entry.

The Human Capital Advantage

Ukraine's highly educated, and tech-savvy workforce has long been a strength, especially in engineering and IT. However, the war has led to significant labor shortages — many skilled workers, particularly in construction, are serving in the military or have been displaced. As Ukraine begins large-scale recovery, addressing this gap is vital. Strategies to reintegrate veterans, bring back displaced professionals, and invest in vocational training will be key to rebuilding with local expertise.

Conclusion: Through strategic reforms, multilateral support like the Ukraine Facility, and the creation of vehicles such as the U.S.-Ukraine Investment Fund, Ukraine is positioning itself as Europe's next growth engine.

For those with vision, courage, and long-term commitment, Ukraine offers not only financial returns but the chance to contribute to one of the most significant reconstruction efforts in modern history. The risks are undeniable. But so are the opportunities.



CELEBRITY POWER MEETS PROPERTY: WHAT'S DRIVING DEMAND IN DUBAI'S LUXURY REAL ESTATE MARKET?

Abdulla Lahej, Chairman of Amaal, shares his insights on how celebrity collaborations and branded residences are reshaping Dubai's real estate landscape and elevating buyer expectations

Dubai has positioned itself as a prime destination for high-end developments underpinned by celebrity and luxury brand partnerships; a strategic trend reshaping global buyer expectations. From fashion legends to international sports icons, these collaborations are enhancing the city's real estate appeal while transforming luxury property into lifestyle investments. The growing involvement of globally recognised figures has become a proven lever for accelerating demand and boosting long-term value. In 2023, 59% of surveyed global HNWIs expressed interest in owning a branded residence in Dubai. That number rose to 69% in 2024. With the UAE now ranked as the third-largest market for branded real estate, the market is primed for continued expansion, driven in no small part by the power of celebrity endorsement.

The Power of Celebrity Endorsement

Celebrity involvement in property development is a proven strategy for differentiation in a saturated luxury market. From Neymar Jr.'s \$54 million penthouse at Bugatti Residences, David and Victoria Beckham's high-profile ties to The Palm to Shah Rukh Khan's affiliation with Dubai developments, these collaborations

Football superstar Neymar Jr. recently purchased a lavish penthouse in Dubai for approximately \$54 million.





Indian star Shah Rukh Khan's enduring bond with Dubai extends beyond cinema — into the world of branded real estate and iconic living.

Bollywood actor Hrithik Roshan is the brand ambassador of a luxury real estate project in Dubai.



generate unparalleled media coverage, elevate project perception, and create immediate buzz. Beyond name recognition, such partnerships offer a sense of authenticity and prestige, encouraging a deeper emotional connection between the project and potential buyers. For developers, this translates to faster sales cycles and stronger brand positioning to a ready-made audience.

Lifestyle Becomes a Status Symbol

The demand for celebrity-backed projects is driven by the promise of

aspirational living. Buyers are not just purchasing a home; they are buying into a lifestyle that mirrors the glamour, success, and sophistication of their favourite stars. This becomes a status symbol, conversation piece, and even social currency among the global elite. Residences often reflect the aesthetics and personal brand of the associated celebrity, featuring curated design, quality materials, and tailor-made amenities that transform everyday lives. This emotional and symbolic appeal is particularly powerful among international buyers seeking a slice of the elite lifestyle Dubai embodies.

Trust, Credibility and Global Appeal

Celebrity endorsements lend a layer of trust and credibility that traditional marketing cannot replicate. A celebrity association acts as a quality assurance badge for many international investors unfamiliar with local developers. The "free marketing" effect, from press headlines to viral social media posts, enables projects to gain early traction and maintain long-term relevance. The ripple effect of global visibility generated by these partnerships extends far beyond Dubai, attracting buyers and investors from Europe, Asia, and the Americas. With the number of UHNWIs in the UAE expected to grow by over 30% by 2028, such global appeal in a market where international investment is a key driver of growth and resilience is vital.

Economics of Desire

Exclusivity remains a key driver of value in luxury real estate. Celebrity-branded projects are often limited in scale, offering only a handful of bespoke units, penthouses, or villas; each a collector's item that cannot be easily replicated. This scarcity creates urgency and heightens perceived value, allowing developers to command substantial premiums. In Dubai, it's not uncommon for such properties to be priced 20% higher than comparable non-branded



Global icons David and Victoria Beckham have tied their luxury lifestyle to Dubai's most exclusive addresses.

assets. Branded residences in the city are perceived as premium assets and can fetch up to 86% more than non-branded counterparts, well above the global average of 30-35%.

ROI Potential

Celebrity-backed properties enjoy higher resale value due to their storytelling power and emotional resonance. They are widely viewed as low-risk, high-reward assets. In Knight Frank's survey, 59% of respondents identified 'high yield or investment potential' as their top reason for purchasing a branded residence in Dubai. Over half of prospective investors said their interest stemmed primarily from capital value gains, while 36% expect price appreciation of 5-10% within the first year of ownership, particularly among those with a net worth between US\$10-15 million.

The Dubai Advantage

Cities like Miami, London, and New York have long embraced branded developments, and Dubai also offers a uniquely dynamic environment for the next evolution of celebrity-endorsed real estate. The city's world-class infrastructure, favourable tax environment, and cosmopolitan lifestyle attract high-profile individuals and



Hollywood actor Adrien Brody at the launch of a real estate project in Dubai Islands.

buyers alike. Developers can tap into this synergy by creating projects as iconic as the brand & figures associated with them. An example is the entrance of MANSORY into real estate, in collaboration with Amaal, to develop a property that blends luxury automotive design with bespoke living, setting a new standard for branded residences in the city.

Developers who embrace authenticity, craft meaningful

partnerships, and focus on delivering real value through design and experience will continue to shape the next chapter of luxury living in Dubai. The most successful projects are those that combine the allure with substance, innovation, and a genuine commitment to quality. For both residents and investors, these projects are icons of aspiration, enduring prestige, and innovation.

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Joohee Patel on Crafting Spaces that Tell Stories

In an exclusive conversation with **REM TIMES**, Joohee Patel, Founder and Principal Designer, The Design Compound, shares the journey behind her design philosophy

Deepa Natarajan Lobo

For Joohee Patel, design is more than a career—it's a way of seeing and shaping the world. With a lifelong affinity for creativity and an education in interior architecture from CEPT University, she has cultivated a design approach that is both emotionally resonant and technically refined. As the **Founder of The Design Compound**, Joohee has carved out a distinctive space in the industry by prioritizing client stories, contextual elegance, and sustainable choices. In this candid exchange with **REM TIMES**, she talks about her journey, the challenges of leadership, and how meaningful design is born from empathy, adaptability, and a deep understanding of space.

"Design and creativity thrive in an environment where people feel valued, inspired, and empowered to contribute."

Can you share with us your early experiences and influences that shaped your passion for design? What was it that initially drew you to pursue a career in interior architecture?

I have always been a creative child with a vivid imagination. My mom was constantly creating—whether it was sewing my clothes from scratch, making thoughtful gifts, or experimenting with new recipes. She showed me that the world is a canvas, and it is all about what you make of it. Pursuing design was not a decision based on inspiration but rather a natural outlet for my creativity.

Interior architecture became the perfect medium, combining volume, materials, lighting, furniture, and fabrics. Beyond aesthetics, I am fascinated by the psychological impact of spaces and how they influence emotions. The ability to shape environments that evoke specific feelings is what truly drives my passion for design.

How did your education and experiences influence the direction of your career and the founding of The Design Compound?

My education at CEPT University's School of Interior Design gave me a strong

foundation in spatial design, materials, and how spaces influence the way we live and feel. It wasn't just about aesthetics; it was about understanding how people experience their surroundings.

I've also lived and worked in multiple cities—Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Pune, and now Bangalore. This exposure helped me understand culture and life from different perspectives and gave me a unique lens through which to view design. I realized I wanted to tell stories through spaces, creating personalized, meaningful interiors. That vision led me to start The Design Compound, where I could bring my passion for design detailing and client-focused solutions to life.

Among the various projects you've undertaken, is there one that stands out as a personal favourite or one that posed particular challenges?

A recently designed multi-generation home, Solstice, is my favorite project so far. It was an incredible opportunity to design unique details and experiment with a variety of beautiful materials and finishes.

One of the biggest challenges was the year-long pause due to COVID and its aftermath. During that time, we evolved so much as a design studio, and the client's taste and requirements also changed. When the project resumed, we redesigned the entire home with a completely fresh perspective. Thankfully, we had the nicest clients with exquisite taste, which pushed us to create something truly special.

Solstice is a space that is both timeless and deeply personal, blending craftsmanship, thoughtful materials, and elegant details. It reinforced my love for storytelling through design and the importance of adaptability in creating meaningful spaces.

The design industry is constantly evolving. What current market trends do you think are most impactful?

The design industry is ever-changing, but we focus less on fleeting trends and more on getting the basics right. Quality materials, thoughtful details, and spaces that enhance everyday life are at the core of what we do.

What stands out today is the growing emphasis on personalization in design. Clients are moving away from cookie-cutter styles and choosing spaces that reflect their lifestyle, heritage,

and unique preferences. Handcrafted details, vintage elements, and cultural or regional influences are becoming more prominent, blending timeless aesthetics with conscious design.

There is also a shift toward flexible, multi-functional spaces that adapt to changing needs, especially in urban homes. Technology is playing a bigger role too—from smart lighting and appliances to complete home automation. More than ever, both designers and clients are embracing individuality, becoming more experimental, and creating spaces that feel truly personal, which is a breath of fresh air.

As the principal designer and leader of your studio, how would you describe your leadership style? How do you foster creativity, collaboration, and growth within your team?

At The Design Compound, we have a small, close-knit team, which makes communication easy and seamless. I am very conscious of the work culture within our studio and believe that continuous learning should be a top priority for everyone who works with me.

I set a strong design vision, but I also encourage my team to build their confidence by taking the lead in generating ideas, handling client and vendor communication, and making independent decisions. Approachability is key, and we emphasize open communication so that no one hesitates to reach out for support. Above all, fostering a positive, collaborative atmosphere is essential. Design and creativity thrive in an environment where people feel valued, inspired, and empowered to contribute.

Sustainable design is becoming increasingly important. How do you approach sustainability in your work, both in terms of materials used and the overall design process?

Sustainability, for me, is about designing spaces that are timeless, functional, and responsible. I focus on durable materials, quality craftsmanship, and thoughtful planning to ensure longevity, reducing the need for frequent renovations.

We consciously minimize waste by repurposing materials whenever possible and incorporating handcrafted elements that celebrate local artisans. This not only provides employment to skilled craftsmen but also allows clients to own one-of-a-kind, heirloom-quality pieces. Additionally, we prioritize low-VOC materials to create healthier interiors. Sustainability isn't just about materials but about making thoughtful design choices that enhance everyday living while being mindful of the environment.

As a business owner and principal designer, maintaining work-life balance must be a challenge. What strategies do you use to ensure that both your professional and personal lives thrive?

Honestly, I think work-life balance—especially as a business owner and a working mom—is more of a myth than a reality. My personal and professional lives thrive, but not always at the same time.

I believe in giving 100% to whatever I am doing at the moment. If a project needs extra attention or meeting a deadline will make a meaningful impact, I focus entirely on getting it done without worrying about the clock. When I am with my family, I make it a point to be fully present, keeping my phone away and being a hands-on parent.

In many ways, I approach my projects the same way I do

parenting—with dedication, patience, and a commitment to nurturing something meaningful. To recharge and stay inspired, we take culturally immersive vacations as a family. This strengthens our bond and fuels my creativity in unexpected ways.

What's next for The Design Compound? Are there any upcoming projects or innovations you are excited to explore?

We are at an exciting stage at The Design Compound as we prepare to hand over some of our first projects in Bengaluru. Seeing how they come to life and how our clients experience these spaces is something we are really looking forward to.

Within the studio, we are focusing on integrating technology into our design process to make it more efficient and seamless. We are also exploring new software to enhance our workflow. Additionally, we are eager to experiment with innovative materials and techniques that are emerging in the industry. Pushing the boundaries of design while staying true to our philosophy is something we are always excited about.



THE RISE OF RAK: A NEW LUXURY DESTINATION FOR PROPERTY INVESTORS

Ras Al Khaimah is rapidly emerging as the UAE's next luxury real estate hotspot, offering high-end investment opportunities, writes **Artaches Grigorian, Top Broker, Whitewill Dubai**



As Dubai's real estate prices soar and investors seek fresh opportunities, Ras Al Khaimah is quietly and confidently stepping into the spotlight. Once known for its tranquil coastal charm, the emirate is now emerging as a key player in the UAE's luxury real estate sector. From surging short-term rentals and branded residences to high-profile developments and

ambitious infrastructure projects, RAK is one of the top property investment destinations for high-net-worth individuals and global property investors alike.

In 2024, RAK witnessed a remarkable 118% surge in real estate transactions, a clear indicator of growing investor confidence. The market's appetite for branded luxury residences is also growing, with notable developments like the Waldorf Astoria Residences and The Stellar Oceano drawing attention for their exclusivity and elevated lifestyle offerings. Sought-after locations such as Al Marjan Island, Al Hamra Village, and Mina Al Arab are now synonymous with upscale waterfront living, offering a compelling blend of privacy, elegance, and potential for high returns.

Driving Factors Behind RAK's Luxury Boom

RAK's luxury real estate transformation is underpinned by a confluence of strategic factors.

1. Global-Scale Developments Fueling Tourism and Demand

Leading the charge is the \$3.9 billion Wynn Al Marjan Island project—set to become the UAE's first integrated gaming and entertainment resort when it opens in 2027. This development alone is expected to significantly boost international tourism, inject billions into the local economy, and drive-up demand for nearby real estate assets. Such projects signal RAK's evolution into a luxury hospitality and investment magnet. Internationally renowned brands add credibility to developments by delivering top-tier amenities, world-class property management, and strong long-term investment value.

2. Government Incentives and Pro-Investor Regulations

RAK offers a highly favorable investment climate, with 100% foreign ownership, full profit



repatriation, and zero income or capital gains taxes. Initiatives like the Golden Visa program and dedicated free zones such as RAKEZ provide added appeal for foreign investors looking for long-term stability and growth.

These incentives are complemented by multi-billion-dollar investments in infrastructure upgrades, including road expansions, airport enhancements, and smart city initiatives—all designed to enhance connectivity with Dubai and other emirates. Strategic partnerships between the RAK government and global developers further reinforce the region's long-term real estate viability.

3. Price Accessibility Without Compromise

Compared to Dubai, where luxury property prices have reached record highs, RAK offers a more accessible entry point into the high-end market—typically 40–45% more affordable. For investors, this means access to premium assets at a fraction of the cost, without compromising on luxury or location.

4. Unique Lifestyle and Natural Allure

RAK's combination of serene beaches, mountain landscapes, and a slower-paced lifestyle makes it particularly attractive to buyers looking for tranquility along with opulence. The growing demand for eco-conscious, wellness-focused communities also aligns with RAK's luxury developments, many of which incorporate sustainable

building practices and wellness amenities.

Who is Investing?

Ultra-High Net Worth Individuals (UHNWIs) are drawn by the emirate's potential for long-term capital appreciation and the exclusivity of branded residences. Expatriates within the UAE are looking for upscale yet affordable alternatives to Dubai. Meanwhile, institutional investors are entering the fray, enticed by favorable policies and strong rental yields that currently average around eight per cent.

Importantly, RAK is aligning its tourism ambitions with this real estate growth. The emirate aims to welcome 3.5 million visitors annually by 2030, further bolstering demand for short-term luxury rentals and high-end residential properties.

The Next Decade

Experts predict a consistent upward trajectory fueled by project completions, ongoing government support, and increased international visibility. Al Marjan Island, in particular, is seeing a 15% year-on-year price increase, driven by demand for waterfront living and high-profile developments. Developments like the \$1.1 billion Sora Beach Residences by AARK, designed by Japanese

architectural firm Nikken Sekkei, are driving this. By 2029, it's expected that over 40% of RAK's residential units will be branded, underlining the growing appeal of curated luxury living.

Rental yields are expected to remain strong, and with more major global hospitality and residential brands entering the market, investor confidence is likely to continue rising.

Key Message to Potential Investors

RAK is not just an alternative—it's the next frontier for luxury property investment in the UAE. With a unique blend of affordability, strategic developments, and an investor-friendly environment, the emirate offers unmatched opportunities for both capital appreciation and rental income. Whether a seasoned investor seeking diversification or a buyer looking for lifestyle and legacy, RAK delivers on every front.

As demand for branded residences and resort-style living continues to soar, property values in the emirate are poised to rise. For developers, this signals a lucrative, high-margin segment. For investors, it represents an opportunity to own exclusive assets in a region that balances luxury with long-term growth.



Why is Dubai the Star of the Global Real Estate Market?

REM TIMES talks to **Sanjeev Vig**, whose journey from filmmaking to real estate trading and luxury villa redevelopment proves that the best stories and the most visionary cities are built with purpose

Megha Anthony

From the world of filmmaking to trading prime properties and redeveloping luxury villas, **Sanjeev Vig's** journey is as layered as the homes he now brings to market. After spending over a decade in cinema—working under top filmmakers before directing projects of his own—his foray into real estate wasn't a detour, but a deliberate evolution. It was in Dubai that he found the

wings to dream bigger, pivot with clarity, and seize an opportunity.

Today, as **Founder & Partner of Kingsmark Real Estate and Ascendas**

Developers, he blends storytelling with strategy—redeveloping villas with purpose and responding to market shifts through strategic trades and land acquisitions, including over AED 300 million

secured this quarter alone.

In this exclusive feature, **REM TIMES** speaks to Sanjeev about his creative shift into real estate, Dubai's evolving landscape, and why he believes this city remains the true star in the global property narrative.

You began your career in film direction before moving into real estate. How did that evolution come about, and how has it shaped your approach to the business?

I spent over a decade in the film industry—working under top directors and eventually directing my own projects. It taught me how to think creatively, manage teams, meet deadlines, and deliver under pressure. When I began exploring real estate, I saw many of the same principles applied. In film, you build scenes; in real estate, you build spaces that shape lives.

What drew me in was the tangibility. Real estate offers something lasting—a space, a structure, a legacy. But it also demands instinct. The key is knowing when to enter, and when to exit, and being able to spot a great deal in a sea of good ones. Timing and execution matter.

The discipline I learned in films—managing people, staying on schedule, and delivering with intent—translated seamlessly. And today, every villa we redevelop is a composition in itself—a setting for someone's future memories.

You recently facilitated over AED 300 million in land acquisition deals. What trends are emerging in Dubai's development landscape, and how do you see this shaping the future of the market?

Yes, this quarter, Kingsmark facilitated over AED 300 million in land acquisitions for development deals. But more than the number, it reflects a broader shift in Dubai's real estate dynamic. We're now seeing a trend where land costs are matching—or even surpassing—development costs. For some, that raises concerns about feasibility. But from my perspective, it's a positive sign. It shows how much value has been created in the

market evolve—and what kind of demand are you now catering to?

What we're seeing is less about shifting trends and more about Dubai's larger transformation. The city's infrastructure, leadership, and global positioning have made it a magnet for serious buyers. Since the pandemic, there's been a significant increase in demand from Europe—especially the UK and Germany—with many buyers choosing to call Dubai home.

While trading villas for clients, I noticed a clear gap: high demand for modern, ready-to-move-in homes, but limited supply. That's where redevelopment became our focus—

That said, the fundamentals remain incredibly strong. Demand is driven by long-term investors and end-users from Europe, Asia, and beyond. The city continues to deliver—on safety, infrastructure, and leadership.

So while short-term adjustments may happen, the bigger picture is clear: Dubai's trajectory is upward. I see the next two to three years as a period of continued strength, especially for those who are invested in the city's long-term vision.

With sustained interest in luxury living and evolving buyer expectations, what do you see as the next chapter for Dubai's residential market—particularly in the villa and townhouse segment?

Dubai's residential market is entering a strong phase. We're seeing a new wave of buyers—especially younger investors from Europe, India, and China—who want more than just square footage. They're looking for homes that reflect their lifestyle, values, and long-term goals.

Villas are in high demand because they offer exactly that—livability, privacy, and long-term value. As Dubai continues to grow, so does the appetite for thoughtfully developed, ready-to-live-in homes. It's no longer just about luxury—it's about quality of life. And in that sense, the opportunity in this segment is just beginning.

As someone who has reinvented himself and his career, what keeps you driven in such a fast-paced industry?

There is a line I heard in a movie —“Every day above the ground is a good day.” It stayed with me. I believe if you're healthy and have the chance to build something meaningful, you keep pushing forward.

Each chapter has taught me something new, and I still feel there's so much more to do. What truly drives me is being in a city like Dubai. It gives you the freedom to grow, the space to learn, and the platform to evolve. When you work in an environment like this, it doesn't feel like work—it feels like purpose.

" The discipline I learned in films—managing people, staying on schedule, and delivering with intent—translated seamlessly. And today, every villa we redevelop is a composition in itself—a setting for someone's future memories. "

market, especially as selling prices have shot up significantly over the past year.

There is limited land left in prime locations, which naturally drives demand and value. What we're seeing is a more competitive, mature market where investors are willing to pay a premium because they know the long-term returns are there. The fundamentals are strong, and the appetite for luxury developments remains high.

Dubai continues to evolve with clarity and speed. For developers who can read the market, this is an opportunity to move decisively. We're scaling up our villa redevelopment pipeline to meet that demand—the land is telling us where the momentum is.

With this surge in land activity and high-end development, how have you seen the villa

reviving older villas to meet the expectations of today's end-users.

Dubai's evolution has created a ripple effect across the market. Our role in the industry is to respond to that demand with homes that reflect both the pace and quality of the city's growth.

With growing conversations around price trends and the possibility of a market correction, how do you assess Dubai's current real estate cycle—and where do you see it heading?

Dubai has seen remarkable growth, and with that, rising prices. A correction—say 10 to 20%—wouldn't be unexpected, and frankly, it's healthy. It brings balance, sets benchmarks, and reflects market maturity.

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TRANSFORMING REAL ESTATE, ONE ALGORITHM AT A TIME

JLL's latest global research explores how artificial intelligence is reshaping real estate from occupier demand to smarter buildings, investment models, and a rising data infrastructure boom



Artificial intelligence is no longer a futuristic add-on for the real estate industry—it is rapidly becoming a core driver of change. In its latest report, *Artificial Intelligence: Real Estate Revolution or Evolution?*, global real estate services company JLL lays out a compelling vision of how AI will redefine the built environment, not just through automation and analytics, but by shaping entire markets, asset types, and the way people live, work, and play.

The report highlights that AI adoption is accelerating across real estate, with over 90% of C-suite leaders expecting workforce changes in the next five years due to AI, and a similar proportion planning to increase investment in the technology. Still, understanding remains a barrier—many business leaders are experimenting cautiously, piloting AI-powered tools before scaling.

Crucially, AI's impact is being felt on three levels: the real estate market as a whole, the AI sector as a growing occupier, and the industry as a user of AI. In the U.S. alone, AI firms doubled their real estate footprint between 2020 and 2023, reaching 1.9 million sq m, concentrated in tech hubs like San Francisco, Boston, and Seattle. This demand is driven by a growing AI ecosystem—including chipmakers, data providers, and application developers—that requires energy-efficient, high-capacity infrastructure such as data centers, cloud facilities, and advanced cooling systems.

Meanwhile, AI is extending the technological wave that PropTech began. Over 500 companies globally now offer AI-enabled real estate solutions—from portfolio analytics and investment modeling to automated facilities management and leasing support. Use cases are expanding rapidly, including generative AI tools for floorplan

generation, tenant query handling, and document summarization.

The report also underscores the emergence of "intelligent buildings," where AI-compliant infrastructure—like high-speed connectivity, automated systems, and predictive energy controls—becomes a baseline expectation, much like Wi-Fi is today. This trend supports ESG goals too: firms like Royal London Asset Management have achieved energy savings of up to 59% using AI-powered HVAC optimization.

Importantly, JLL urges real estate players to act now—but responsibly. With increasing regulatory focus on data quality, ethical AI use, and sustainability, companies must develop clear implementation strategies, pilot technologies with purpose, and align innovation with long-term value creation.

Whether evolution or disruption, one thing is clear: AI is set to become a defining force in the next chapter of real estate transformation.

Built on Trust, Bound by Integrity

Better Communities is transforming the property management landscape in the UAE by focusing on smart and sustainable solutions that elevate everyday living

When **Better Communities Owner Association Management (BCOAM)** was founded in the last quarter of 2021, it started without a single project—just a vision shared by a handful of professionals who believed that community management in the UAE could be done better, cleaner, and more ethically. That vision has since transformed into one of the most inspiring growth stories in the region's property management industry. In under four years, BCOAM has grown into a trusted name, now managing more than 30 residential and commercial buildings, supported by a strong and diverse team of 30 individuals who are united not only by professional expertise but by values that form the very DNA of the company.

What makes BCOAM's journey truly exceptional is not merely the number of communities it serves, but how it has earned the confidence of the market—through integrity, honesty, and a relentless commitment to doing things right. In a landscape where cutting corners is often seen as a shortcut to success, BCOAM has taken the road less traveled. The team never sought to bypass procedures and has always refused to compromise on compliance. Every process, whether a government submission, budget approval, or procurement cycle, is handled by the letter of the law and with full transparency. BCOAM does not skip lines—it queues like everyone

else, meets the criteria, and lets its work speak for itself. It is this discipline and principle-based culture that has earned the trust of major developers such as Ellington, Binghatti, Imtiaz, ZaZEN, Ayat, and Grovy—who now rely on BCOAM to manage their signature developments.

In 2025, BCOAM was awarded the prestigious Accredited Association Management Company (AAMC) credential by the Community Associations Institute (CAI) in the United States. This internationally respected recognition is reserved for companies that meet the highest global standards in community management. It represents not only excellence in operational practices but a deep-rooted commitment to ethics and stakeholder responsibility. For BCOAM, this milestone did not come as a surprise but as a natural progression of years spent doing things the right way—quietly, consistently, and without compromise.

What sets BCOAM apart is its steadfast refusal to put profit before principle. Every client engagement is built on transparency. The trust BCOAM earns is not through persuasion or packaging, but through proof: clean audits, happy customers, resolved complaints, and thriving communities.

Even as the company scales, its growth remains intentional. Projects are not taken for the sake of numbers, but only when the team is confident it can uphold its promise of service and oversight. This is why BCOAM boasts

a client retention rate above 95%, satisfaction ratings above 98%, and a service record that can be considered among the best in the market. Behind these achievements is a team of professionals who embody the values the company was founded upon. Recruited not just for technical skills, but for integrity and work ethic, every employee at BCOAM is expected to uphold the highest standards. They undergo continuous training, hold international certifications, and most importantly, take personal pride in their work. Every task is executed with full accountability.

Better Communities isn't just a name—it is a philosophy. The company doesn't merely manage buildings. It builds trust, restores value, and redefines what responsible property management should look like. As BCOAM looks to the future, with expansion plans into new territories and a commitment to smart technologies that enhance transparency and efficiency, its foundation remains unchanged. The company will continue to operate with honesty at its core, never trading integrity for convenience, and never compromising the values that brought it this far. In an industry where perception often masks performance, BCOAM has chosen to let its results do the talking. Because for Better Communities, true growth isn't just about numbers—it's about earning trust, one community at a time.



Building Circular Economies Through Local Collaboration

Bjarke Kovshøj, Strategic Programmes Manager at Climate KIC, Europe's leading climate innovation agency, talks about climate innovation and the vitality of upstream circularity

Deepa Natarajan Lobo

The Strategic Programmes Manager at Climate KIC, one of Europe's leading climate innovation agencies, **Bjarke Kovshøj** is a Danish national with a deep-rooted passion for sustainability shaped by his upbringing in one of the world's greenest countries. Having built a career at the intersection of climate innovation, entrepreneurship, and systems thinking, his early experiences—ranging from academic research in international business with a climate focus to hands-on work with CLEAN, Denmark's Cleantech Cluster—laid the foundation for his current work driving systemic change and climate action in urban environments.

At Climate KIC, Bjarke plays a pivotal role in developing and managing 'Innovation Clusters' in

emerging cities, with a special focus on accelerating the topics such as circular economy in high-growth urban centres like Nairobi, Kenya and Bengaluru, India.

Currently, he is leading the Circular Economy Innovation Cluster (CEIC) project in Bengaluru, developed by

Climate KIC in collaboration with SecondMuse and funded by the IKEA Foundation. The initiative addresses urban waste challenges through upstream innovation, support for informal waste workers, and cross-sector collaboration. The CEIC has already benefited over 130 informal workers (in both Nairobi and Bengaluru) and contributed to carbon dioxide reduction working directly with circular

entrepreneurs through the Circular Economy ClimAccelerator.

In an interview with REM TIMES, Kovshøj talks about his journey into climate innovation, the importance of upstream circularity, and how cities like Nairobi and Bengaluru are becoming testbeds for scalable, locally driven circular economy solutions.

Can you share a bit about your journey into climate innovation and how you came to focus on circular economy systems in cities like Nairobi and Bengaluru?

I have always been passionate about climate innovation, shaped by growing up in Denmark (a global leader in the green transition). While studying International Business, I focused my coursework on climate innovation whenever possible. During a wave of new green initiatives in Denmark, I landed an internship with the newly launched Cleantech Cluster. That opportunity turned into five years of hands-on climate innovation experience before I moved on to Climate KIC, Europe's leading climate innovation agency and community.

Climate KIC's Innovation Clusters strengthen climate innovation ecosystems by connecting different actors who typically work in isolation. These clusters foster collaboration, innovation, and learning to build inclusive and circular economies. They are designed to address systemic challenges at the local level.





In cities like Nairobi and Bengaluru, waste is an escalating issue with wide-reaching impacts on areas such as public health and financial resilience. This highlights the urgent need for a shift toward a circular economy. In response, Climate KIC, in collaboration with our partners SecondMuse and GrowthAfrica, chose to focus on Circular Economy solutions—leveraging entrepreneurship as a key driver of systemic change.

The CEIC has been active in two very different urban environments—Nairobi and Bengaluru. What inspired this cross-continental approach?

Nairobi and Bengaluru have a lot in common. Both are growing fast and are dealing with more waste as their population increases. At the same time, they have lively entrepreneurial ecosystems and more organisations stepping up on climate action and circular economy initiatives. Finally, informal waste workers play a key role in waste management and circularity in both cities, supporting the everyday collection, sorting, and disposal. However, their role goes beyond keeping the city clean; they possess invaluable expertise and skills that can significantly benefit the economy.

By bringing different sectors and entrepreneurs together, we want to speed up the creation of circular solutions and help them learn from one another and share ideas. That way, we can build a model that other cities, whether in emerging or developed countries, can replicate and adapt to tackle similar big challenges.

One of your key insights from the initiative is around “upstream circularity.” How can this concept be

applied to the real estate and construction sectors in cities where urban expansion is accelerating?

Upstream innovation refers to designing products and systems in a way that prevents waste from being created in the first place. It focuses on minimising environmental impact early in the product lifecycle, so that products and processes are inherently more sustainable. In rapidly expanding cities like Nairobi and Bengaluru, embedding

"It is important to foster meaningful collaboration among diverse actors who don't usually work together, including the informal sector, which holds vital knowledge about waste management."

this mindset into urban development is critical. It calls for meaningful collaboration across sectors—bringing together architects, developers, policymakers, and informal actors—to co-create circular solutions. In the real estate and construction sector, this includes designing for disassembly, using regenerative or low-impact materials, and integrating reuse and recovery strategies into urban planning frameworks.

Construction and demolition waste are growing problems in many African cities. Do you see viable circular solutions—such as reuse of materials, modular construction, or design for disassembly—emerging within real estate development?

Nairobi and Bengaluru really show the kind of big challenges a lot of fast-growing economies in Asia, Latin America, and Africa are facing. The real solution comes from their local communities and ecosystems. That's why Climate KIC's Innovation Cluster approach focuses on nurturing locally led initiatives. Achieving a circular economy—through material reuse, modular construction, and design for disassembly—requires first establishing a clear vision centred on refusing, rethinking, and reducing waste. Equally important is fostering meaningful collaboration among diverse actors who don't usually work together, including the informal sector, which holds vital knowledge about waste management.

Looking towards 2030, what would a circular, climate-smart real estate and urban ecosystem look like in an African city like Nairobi?

I think it begins with a mindset shift. All

actors involved need to see why circular solutions matter and what they can actually achieve. This has to be followed by a strong local push to build new forms of collaboration, including partnerships beyond the traditional real estate sector. We need a strong pipeline, one that brings together early- and late-stage startups, investor support, and enabling policies to truly nurture innovation. It's also important that this work happens locally. In fact, there are a lot of promising local initiatives happening right here in Nairobi and Bengaluru. What's needed is a unifying, locally grounded vision that channels collective efforts towards upstream innovation. These cities, with their dynamic ecosystems, are uniquely positioned to lead and to develop scalable, transformative solutions by 2030 that inspire globally.

BUSINESS FRONTIER LEADERSHIP CONCLAVE AND AWARDS 2025 CELEBRATES GLOBAL BUSINESS EXCELLENCE

The one-day event consisted of impactful thought leadership sessions addressing key global business challenges

The inaugural edition of the **Business Frontier Leadership Conclave and Awards 2025** concluded on a high note, uniting over 50 distinguished business leaders, innovators, and policymakers from around the world. Organised by **Crestus Media** and presented in partnership with **Zenesis Corporation**, the prestigious event was supported by media partners **Business Frontier**, **REM TIMES** and **Global Leaders Today**, with **Plan3Media** as the official event management partner.

The one-day conclave consisted of guests from over 10 countries and featured an exceptional lineup of thought leadership sessions designed to foster dialogue on pressing global business challenges. In his opening address, **Jatin Deepchandani, Founder & CEO of Crestus Media**, set the tone by emphasizing the event's mission to create a collaborative platform for

impactful conversations and innovation.

The programme was graced by the presence of guests of honour: H.E. Ambassador Bogdan Kolarov (Office for Development Affairs, UAE Presidential Court), Mohamed AL Banna (Group CEO & Founder Lead Ventures & Connect Lead), and Lieutenant First Khalid Muhammad Banasar (Dubai Police). The dignitaries were felicitated during the event and also presented awards to the winners. H.E. Bogdan Kolrav addressed the gathering and shared valuable insights on diplomacy, development, and leadership.

Insightful Sessions

The **SoAR! MasterClass**, led by **Dr. Priscilla Kucer, Founder & CEO of Priscilla Kucer Consulting Solutions LLC**, empowered global leaders with actionable insights on aligning **profitability** with **sustainability** for long-term impact.

The keynote sessions featured influential voices from across the industry, including **Dr. Kamran Khan, CEO of Arabian Entertainment Co. Ltd.**, Saudi Arabia, who delivered a compelling address on The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Leadership, alongside powerful insights shared by **Vanja Keindl, Sanjeev Kumar, and Yogita Tulsiani** on leadership, innovation, and transformation in today's business landscape.

The event also consisted of two expert panel discussions—one focused on how sustainable leadership can drive growth through purpose and responsibility, and the other explored how AI and automation are transforming the future of leadership. Both sessions delved into the evolving role of leaders in a rapidly changing world and consisted of compelling insights from industry leaders such as Dr. Abeer S. Al-



Humaimedy, Dr. Mina Iskander, Nedim Alicic, Sanjeev Kumar and Dr Samir Thabet.

A major highlight of the conclave was the Awards Ceremony, recognizing excellence across several categories. Noteworthy awardees included:

- Dr. Adriana Vadillo (Global Computing) – Visionary Leader in IT
- Hana Hamzeh (Fifreedomtoday) – Women Leadership in Finance
- Dr. Satpreet Singh (Ardass Corporation) – Business Leader of the Year

Additionally, the event witnessed

the launch of The Leadership Hall – Collector's Edition, honoring transformative leadership. Esteemed inductees included Cristian Salazar, Dr. Monica Sijabat, and Ar. Smita Das.

The conclave concluded with a dynamic networking session, enabling meaningful interactions among participants. By spotlighting innovation, collaboration, and strategic foresight, the Business Frontier Leadership Conclave and Awards 2025 firmly positioned itself as a premier global platform for business excellence.



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UAE Emerges as Major Investor in Africa



The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is rapidly expanding its economic and strategic footprint across Africa, filling a growing vacuum left by waning U.S. and Chinese influence. With investments exceeding \$110 billion since 2019, the UAE is emerging as the continent's dominant foreign player, pouring capital into critical infrastructure sectors such as real estate, ports, mining, and renewable energy.

The shift is part of the UAE's broader agenda to diversify its oil-dependent economy and establish itself as a global leader in finance and technology. "The UAE is turning into a dominant foreign player in much of Africa," said Anna Jacobs, a nonresident fellow at the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington.

Key emirati firms closely tied to the

ruling elite are spearheading the charge. AMEA Power, based in Dubai, is involved in clean energy projects in over 10 African nations, including Kenya, Egypt, and South Africa. Abu Dhabi National Energy Company has active projects in Morocco, Senegal, and South Africa. DP World, the government-backed logistics giant, has invested billions into ports and free trade zones from Algeria to Zambia. Notably, it is developing the Berbera port in Somaliland, where the UAE also operates a military base.

In the mining sector, Emirati conglomerate International Holding Company invested over \$1 billion last year to acquire a 51% stake in Zambia's Mopani Copper Mines, a strategic move amid growing global demand for critical minerals.

The UAE is also making its mark in real estate and tourism. In Egypt, it committed \$35 billion to build a new coastal city and tourism hub, signaling long-term strategic engagement with North African economies.

While China still maintains a significant presence in Africa, its investments have declined following domestic economic pressures and rising African debt concerns. In comparison, the UAE announced \$97 billion in new African investments in 2022 and 2023 alone—three times more than China and nearly ten times the U.S. total, which was around \$10 billion in 2023.

With a combination of wealth, political alignment, and long-term strategy, the UAE is reshaping Africa's development landscape—and solidifying its own role as a global power broker.

Egypt's Real Estate Market Sees Growth Momentum in Q1 2025



The real estate market in Egypt is witnessing significant growth momentum and activity on the back of easing inflation and currency stability, according to JLL's latest Q1 2025 Cairo Market Dynamics report.

The hospitality sector saw the opening of two 5-star hotels, namely the Hilton Cairo Nile Maadi Hotel and Sofitel Cairo Downtown Nile, in the first quarter (Q1) of 2025. This added 870 keys to Cairo's hospitality sector. JLL expects 650 keys to be added in the 4- and 5-star segments by the end of the year, raising the total stock from the current 27,800 keys.

In the office market, 10,500 square meters of new leasable space were added in Q1 2025, with 615,300 sqm expected by end-year. As for the residential market, 7,500 new units were delivered in the three months to March, bringing the total stock to more than 300,000.

About 28,500 units are projected to be added to the residential market this year, mainly in East Greater Cairo. Q1 2025 also saw the addition of 27,000 sqm of new space in Cairo's retail sector. This brought the total stock to 3.22 million sqm.

Ayman Sami, Country Head of JLL Egypt, said: "Cairo's real estate market

demonstrates remarkable adaptability and growth potential, driven by a confluence of factors including stabilizing economic conditions and easing inflationary pressures. We are seeing consumer preferences across sectors evolve, and developers who can anticipate and respond to these trends will be best positioned to capitalize on the short- and long-term opportunities."

"Government initiatives are stimulating economic growth, making Cairo's real estate market increasingly attractive for both domestic and international investors," he added.



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