



INSIGHTS

From the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade

www.icdt-cidc.org



February 2025

Number 9



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EGYPT SEEKS TO STRENGTHEN ITS STATUS AS A "START-UP NATION."

By improving internet quality, expanding digital accessibility, and strengthening cybersecurity infrastructure, Egypt is cementing its role as a driving force in Africa's digital transformation.

In 2024, Egypt maintained its leading position in Africa's startup ecosystem, securing over a third of the continent's total venture capital funding, despite a notable decline in overall investment.

Indeed, Egypt secured a spot among the top five African nations investing in technology in 2024. The country ranked third, with \$297 million invested across 89 deals, underlining its growing

influence in Africa's tech ecosystem.

Moreover, Egypt saw an increase of 6.3 million internet users between 2022 and 2024, bringing the total to over 82 million. The country's cybersecurity efforts have also gained global recognition, with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) ranking Egypt among the top 12 nations in its 2023–2024 Global Cybersecurity Index.

One of Egyptian tech's greatest accomplishments to date is the unicorn MNT-Halan which was created to digitally bank the unbanked and substitute cash with electronic solutions.

Since its inception, MNT-Halan has witnessed substantial growth, expanding its customer base over 20-fold to serve more than seven million users. Its digital platform, the Halan app, continues to evolve, now offering a wide array of



services including various types of loans, pre-paid cards, e-wallets, e-commerce, gold, and money market fund investments, with plans to introduce additional features soon.

Egypt's startup ecosystem is experiencing rapid growth, signaling a major shift in the nation's digital economy. The ICT sector's \$6.5 billion revenue – accounting for 5.8% of the GDP – shows how vital startups are to Egypt's economic progress.

Despite Egypt's resilient

startup ecosystem, the scene saw a sharp downturn in the first half of 2024, with only 33 startups securing \$83 million—an 80% drop compared to last year.

In this regard, Egypt unveiled in 2024 new tax incentives to enhance economic efficiency and streamline the system for small businesses, startups, freelancers, and professionals with annual revenues below \$311,000.

With a combination of government backing, growing interest from international

investors, and a pool of talented entrepreneurs, Egypt's startup ecosystem is set to keep growing. As these companies expand and innovate, they are cementing Egypt's role as a leading tech hub in the Middle East and Africa.

Moreover, the fact that Saudi startup boom creates 'entrepreneurial bridge' with Egypt, is shaping the augurs the birth of an intra-OCI ecosystem of start-ups

Source : Daba Finance, Fast Company Middle East

INDONESIA AT THE CROSSROADS OF THE CHINA-US TRADE CRISIS

Bank Indonesia (BI) has projected that Indonesia's economy will grow between 4.8 % and 5.6 % in 2025, with a similar outlook for 2026. However, such predictions shall consider the current geopolitical tensions arising between US and China.

Indonesia is accelerating its industrial growth, fueled by manufacturing, mining, and digital innovation. Backed by government policies and foreign investments, key sectors like automotive, electronics, and textiles are expanding. With abundant resources and a strategic location, the nation is positioning itself as a major player in global trade and economy.

However, since regaining the White House, The president Trump has reignited a trade crisis, imposing tariffs and tightening economic policies, particularly against China. The move signals a renewed battle over trade practices and global market dominance between the two countries.

While Indonesia's direct exposure remains limited, as it is not yet a key U.S. trading partner, a global trade crisis presents both risks and opportunities. The risk lies in a



potential influx of Chinese goods into Southeast Asia, pressuring domestic industries. On the other hand, this situation also drive the industries to relocate and this would lead to more investments in the manufacturing sectors.

Indeed, Trade conflicts may prompt global investors to seek alternatives to China, with Indonesia emerging as a possible destination alongside Vietnam. Countries like South Korea, which previously

invested heavily in China, are already shifting their focus to other markets.

At this point, It is important to distinguish between the two key relocation trends. Some Chinese companies are expanding their production overseas to avoid trade restrictions, while foreign firms that previously relied on China-based manufacturing sectors are also looking to move their operations elsewhere. Indonesia has an opportunity to attract both types of

investments, but each comes with its own set of challenges and requirements.

At this regard, Indonesian government is offering incentives to contribute to such relocations including the tax holiday. Chinese companies are given tax exemptions for up to 20 years, depending on the

investment value.

However, Indonesia must carefully navigate the geopolitical risks of large-scale Chinese industrial investments, especially as the White House has warned of penalties for countries that provide a backdoor for Chinese firms.

A long-term strategic approach is crucial rather than reacting impulsively to Chinese investment, Indonesia must ensure that industrial relocation translates into sustainable economic growth rather than new vulnerabilities.

Source : East Asia forum, Jakarta Globe.

DIVERSIFICATION OF MINING PRODUCTION IN NIGER: COPPER IN THE SPOTLIGHT.



As part of the diversification of its mining production, Niger has decided to launch the exploitation of its copper located in the northern region of the country. The company that has been selected for this purpose is the Nigerien mining company Cominair SA. The targeted production is 2,700 tonnes of copper per year over a period of ten years and it is expected to generate 300 direct jobs.

As for the mining royalty, it is expected to generate 4 billion CFA francs, about 6,35 MUSD,

to the Nigerien state.

In the same vein, local authorities have withdrawn from the french company Orano the exploitation permit of its uranium and granted it to the Nigerien Company Comirex SA, the targeted production is 300 tons of uranium per year, over five years.

Globally, Niger is also known to be a producer of gold and oil. For the latter, it is worth mentioning that from 2020 to 2024 the oil production revenues went from 102 MUSD

to 318 MUSD, corresponding to an increase of 200 % for over the 4 years period.

With these new policies, the Nigerien authorities in place since 2023 show their firm willingness to strengthen the country's sustainable economic development and to maintain sovereignty over the management of the country's mineral wealth.

Source : Jeune Afrique, Afriquinfo.

10th

**DAKAR INTERNATIONAL
EXPO ON HEALTH AND
MEDICAL EQUIPMENT**

5th


**OCI MEMBER STATES
HEALTH EXPO**

THEME :
Health as a tool for the
economic development
of **OCI** Member States



15 - 19 april 2025
at CICES

Special Guest 
Saudi Arabia

Honour guest 

Kingdom of Morocco



KEY FIGURES

A TURNING POINT IN AZERBAIJAN-PAKISTAN TRADE RELATIONS

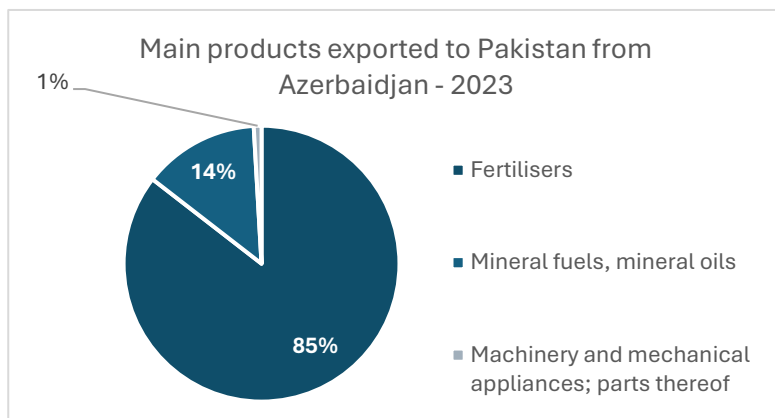
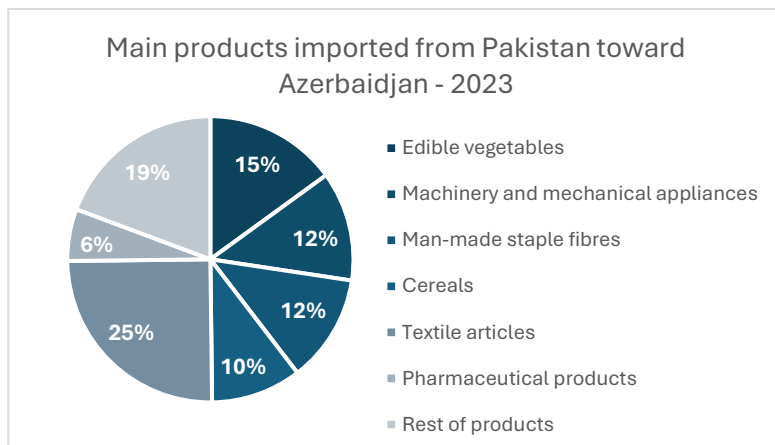
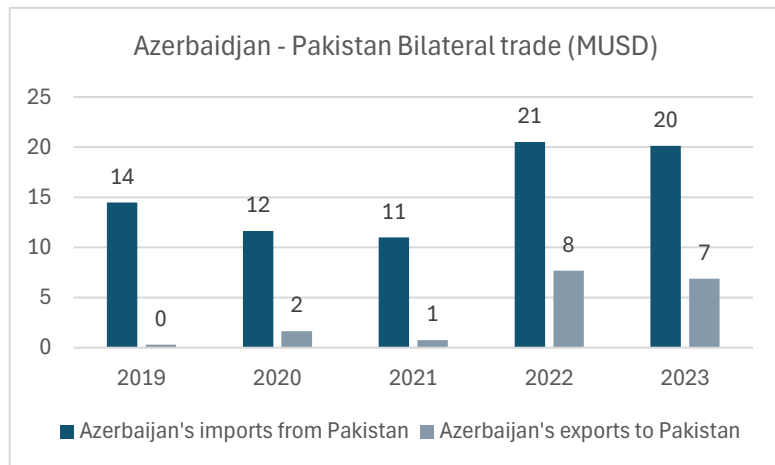
Pakistan and Azerbaijan agreed to expand cooperation in trade, commerce, security, and energy, with the two countries announcing they would ink agreements worth \$2 billion in the coming April.

Pakistan and Azerbaijan have signed agreements and memorandums of understanding (MOUs), chiefly about trade, commerce, defense production, energy, climate change, tourism, culture, education, and other areas, during a visit to Azerbaijan by Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Notable among those are the one signed between the Azerbaijan's state-owned oil company, SOCAR, and Pakistan's oil trading and refining companies, regarding the completion of a pipeline in the South Asian country.

The joint manufacturing of defense industry products, and the establishment of chambers of commerce to facilitate trade was also key points of discussions between the two parties.

Pakistan and Azerbaijan have maintained a close and cordial relationship since Azerbaijan's independence in 1991. As one of the first countries to recognize Azerbaijan's sovereignty, Pakistan formally established diplomatic relations with Azerbaijan on



June 9, 1992.

The trade turnover between Azerbaijan and Pakistan is an indicator of the growing economic relations and strategic partnership in recent years. From 2020 to 2024, significant fluctuations were observed in the trade

turnover between the two countries. Economic relations between Azerbaijan and Pakistan are mainly centered around energy, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and textiles.

The trade turnover between

the two countries made up 27 million USD in 2023. The Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) between Azerbaijan and Pakistan is currently under discussion. Once this agreement comes into force, it is expected that

trade turnover will further increase.

A significant step has been taken in this direction with the inauguration of the Azerbaijan Trade House in Lahore, Pakistan's second-

largest city, signaling the strengthening of bilateral relations between the two countries.

Source : ITC, AzerNews

BRIEFS

➤ **Malaysia-EU FTA talks to conclude in 2026.**

The Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations between Malaysia and the European Union (EU) are expected to be concluded next year according to the Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz who announced it during his visit in Brussels on January 19th, 2025. The palm oil have been successfully introduced in this negotiation and this FTA will enable Malaysian economic operators to reach European markets in upcoming years. Source: New Straits Times

➤ **Taiwan urges Nigeria to sign trade agreement to boost bilateral ties.**

On February 17th, 2025, the Taiwanese government has appealed to Nigeria to sign the Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (IPPA), which has been discussed by the two countries, in order to facilitate improved bilateral relations that would explore mutually beneficial opportunities between both nations and to improve their relations and socio-economic growth. Source: The Sun

➤ **UAE-Kenya trade deal paves way for investment boost.**

In mid January 2025, the UAE formally signed a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (Cepa) with Kenya, the first such deal with a mainland African country. The agreement aims to deepen trade ties between the two nations by eliminating barriers and simplifying customs procedures. The deal is expected to boost exports of agricultural products from Kenya and unlock new investment opportunities for UAE companies. Besides, trade between the two countries has more than doubled over the past decade. In 2023, total trade between the two countries reached \$3.5 billion, with the UAE ranking as

Kenya's sixth-largest export destination and the second-largest source of imports. Kenya mainly exports meat, fruit, vegetables and flowers to the UAE, which supplies Kenya with petroleum, machinery and chemicals. Source: AGBI

➤ **ICDT and IsDB organized the 2nd Policy Dialogue Forum for OIC Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs)**

the Islamic Center for Development of Trade (ICDT) and the Cooperation and Capacity Development (CCD) Department of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), successfully convened the 2nd Policy Dialogue Forum for OIC Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs) on February 20-21, 2025, in Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco. This follows the inaugural Forum held in June 2022 in Dakar, Republic of Senegal, which took place alongside the 17th OIC Trade Fair.

The Forum attracted a diverse group of 50 participants from various countries, including Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Gabon, The Gambia, Mauritania, Malaysia, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, and Türkiye who shared their experiences in promoting investment for the benefit of other participants, presented their unique programs, outlined promising investment opportunities, and provided insights into the evaluation of investment projects. Source: ICDT





- Encouraging the development of regular trade exchanges among Member States.
 - Promoting investments aimed at trade development.
 - Contributing to the promotion of productions from Member States and facilitating access to foreign
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- Promoting commercial information.
 - Assisting Member States in the field of trade promotion and international trade negotiations.
 - Assisting businesses and economic operators.
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- Encouraging contacts between businessmen from Member States.
 - Promoting the products of Member States, including through regular Islamic Fairs and specialized
-
- Assisting Member States in establishing and organizing Export Promotion Centers.
 - Providing advisory and expertise services to Member States in trade promotion matters.
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- Collecting and disseminating trade data.
 - Developing remotely accessible trade databases.
 - Assisting Member States in establishing Documentation Centers and Commercial Information
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- Encouraging intra-OIC investments.
 - Promoting foreign investments in OIC Member States.
 - Encouraging partnerships among economic operators from Member States.
 - Providing advisory and expertise services to Member States, particularly in export-oriented investment
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- Publishing an Annual Report on intra-Islamic trade.
 - Conducting sectoral studies on products and markets.
 - Studying ways and means to alleviate trade barriers among Member States.
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- Organizing seminars and training programs.
 - Assisting Member States in creating a pool of experts in various fields of trade development.
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- Assisting Member States in trade negotiations.
 - Preparing and organizing intra-OIC trade negotiations.

agenda



■ **ANNUAL INVESTMENT MEETING CONGRESS 2025,**
07-09 April 2025 • Abu Dhabi, UAE

■ **42ND BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF ICDT**
09-10 April 2025 • Casablanca, Morocco

■ **TRAINING COURSE ON STRENGTHENING EFFORTS TO FACILITATE TRANSPORT IN OCI MEMBER LANDLOCKED COUNTRIES.**
29-30 April 2025 • online

■ **ISLAMIC COMMISSION FOR ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS**
15-17 April 2025 • Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

■ **5TH OIC HEALTH EXPO.**
15-19 April 2025 • Dakar, Senegal

■ **PERMANENT FINANCE COMMITTEE**
20-23 April 2025 • Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

■ **OIC TOURISM FAIR / AFRICA TOURISM EXPO.**
19-21 June 2025 • Kampala, Uganda

■ **51ST SESSION OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS COUNCIL**
20-21 June 2025 • Istanbul, Türkiye

■ **ICDT INVEST DAYS - MORONI**
09-12 September 2025 • Moroni, Comoros

■ **42ND SESSION OF COMCEC**
01-04 November 2025 • Istanbul, Türkiye

■ **WORLD HALAL SUMMIT**
26-29 November 2025 • Istanbul, Türkiye

■ **OIC INVESTMENT FORUM IN AFRICA**
2-4 December 2025 • Bamako, Mali

■ **9TH ACMOI**
10-11 December 2025 • Jeddah, Saudi Arabia



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