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Business monthly

July 2026

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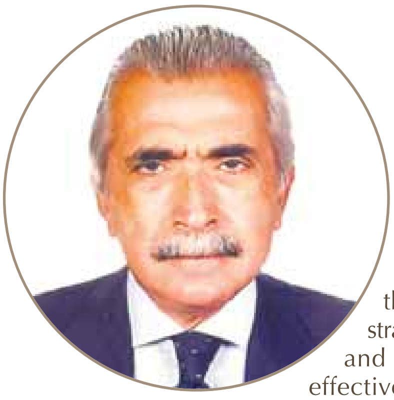

SPORTS, SOFT POWER, AND EGYPT'S NEXT INVESTMENT FRONTIER

For decades, sports were viewed primarily as competition and entertainment. Today, they have become a strategic economic sector and one of the most effective expressions of a nation's soft power. Around the world, governments increasingly recognize that sports create jobs, attract investment, strengthen tourism, develop talent, and enhance a country's global standing. For Egypt, sports represent not only a promising investment frontier but also a powerful new dimension of its international influence.

Egypt's soft power has long rested on its unique combination of ancient civilization, cultural leadership, education, artistic creativity, media influence, diplomacy, and strategic location. Sport now adds a dynamic new dimension to that legacy. Every successful athlete, international competition, and major sporting achievement reinforces Egypt's global image while creating opportunities that extend well beyond the playing field.

Egypt has already established itself as an attractive destination for investment in manufacturing, renewable energy, logistics, tourism, and technology. Sports can become the next frontier. With its strategic location, modern infrastructure, world-class tourism assets, favorable year-round climate, and one of the youngest populations in the region, Egypt possesses all the ingredients to build a vibrant sports economy.

Investment in sports extends far beyond stadiums and professional clubs. It includes sports academies, high-performance training centers, sports medicine, event management, media, hospitality, sports technology, and youth development. Together, these activities generate employment, stimulate entrepreneurship, attract investment, and contribute to economic diversification. Above all, investing in sports is an investment in people.

Egypt's greatest asset is its youth. Millions of young Egyptians possess remarkable athletic talent and ambition. Unlocking that potential requires sustained investment in coaching, sports science, modern facilities, and competitive pathways. Greater private sector participation can help transform athletic promise into professional success while creating opportunities across an expanding sports economy.

Sports also provide something conventional investment promotion often struggles to achieve: authentic global visibility. We witnessed this during the visit of NBA All-Star Ben Simmons to Egypt, hosted by AmCham Egypt with the generous support of Orascom Development, members of the AmCham Travel and Tourism Committee, including Hilton Cairo Grand Nile, and Travco Group. Through social media, the basketball star introduced millions of followers to Egypt's unique attractions, projecting the image of a country that is rich in history yet modern, welcoming, and fully capable of hosting world-class sporting personalities and events.

Even more significant was Egypt's remarkable performance at this summer's FIFA World Cup. Reaching the Round of 16 for the first time in the nation's history inspired millions of Egyptians and earned admiration from football fans around the world. Throughout the tournament, the Egyptian team displayed discipline, resilience, and technical excellence, demonstrating that Egyptian football has entered a new era of international competitiveness.

The Round of 16 match against Argentina will be remembered not only for Egypt's outstanding performance but also for the controversy surrounding several refereeing decisions that many observers believed influenced the outcome. Although the result could not be changed, Egypt emerged with something equally valuable: the respect of the football world. Rarely has an Egyptian team generated such widespread international admiration, reinforcing Egypt's image as a nation of talent, determination, and sportsmanship.

Egypt's sporting excellence extends well beyond football. The national handball team has firmly established itself among the world's elite. Egypt is also the undisputed global leader in squash, with Egyptian men and women consistently dominating the world rankings and winning the sport's most prestigious titles. As squash prepares to make its Olympic debut at the Los Angeles 2028 Games, Egypt will be among the leading contenders for multiple medals. Egypt's achievements were further highlighted when Ahmed Elgendy won Olympic gold in the modern pentathlon at the Paris 2024 Games while setting a new world record.

For countries seeking to strengthen their international brand, these achievements matter. Sporting success attracts visitors, stimulates commercial partnerships, increases sponsorship opportunities, and reinforces investor confidence. In today's world, countries compete not only through trade and investment but also through reputation, influence, talent, and soft power. Sport has become one of the most effective ways to strengthen all four.

To capitalize on this momentum, Egypt should pursue a comprehensive national strategy that encourages sports-related investment while strengthening collaboration among government, the private sector, educational institutions, sports federations, and local communities. Expanding sports academies, promoting sports tourism, supporting sports science and technology, attracting international competitions, and encouraging businesses to invest in athlete development should become national priorities.

Egypt's civilization gave it history. Its culture gave it influence. Its diplomacy earned it regional leadership. Its economy is creating new opportunities. Sport can now add a dynamic new pillar to Egypt's multidimensional soft power, strengthening the country's global image while opening new horizons for investment, tourism, talent development, and sustainable growth.

OMAR MOHANNA
President, AmCham Egypt

American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt

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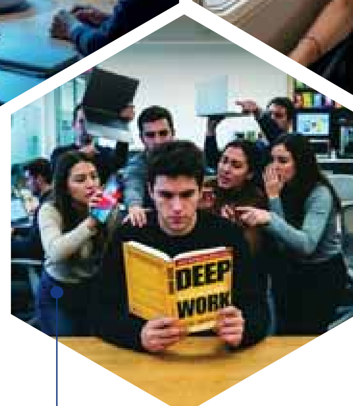

TRANSITION

Egypt has long celebrated national milestones, but few have resonated as deeply in the hearts of the people as the Pharaohs' historic 2026 World Cup performance, which marked the breaking of a barrier that had weighed on the national psyche for decades.

This breakthrough has significantly elevated Egypt's standing on the world stage, opening the doors for elite international clubs to seek out local talent and driving up the market value of homegrown players.

Just as in sports, the business world follows a similar trajectory, as Egypt is rapidly carving out its place as a global hub for talent, shifting from a "brain drain" model to a strategy of strategically sharing its elite minds with the world

Our cover stories dive into this transition, examining how education is being reimagined to focus on student agency and digital literacy. We also look at specific sectors where human insight remains a vital safeguard as artificial intelligence continues to expand.

In our In-Depth features, we examine how more people are taking control of their professional lives through entrepreneurship. For many, franchising has become a doorway to business ownership by leveraging established brand know-how.

We also investigate the surge in flexible financial tools, such as non-bank lending and installment plans, that might help millions manage their daily lives as economic conditions shift.

This month’s Business Read highlights the importance of focus in a world full of digital distractions. We explore the concept of “deep work” and why the ability to perform concentrated, distraction-free tasks is becoming a rare and highly valued asset in today’s economy.

The July issue also reviews recent high-level discussions on the state of the national tourism industry. Additionally, we provide a regional analysis of how shifting global logistics and transportation routes can create new strategic advantages for the local market.

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THE **NEWSROOM**

SAVINGS RATE PLUMMETS TO 1.2% OF GDP

Egypt's gross domestic savings rate fell to 1.2% of GDP in FY 2024/25 from 6.1% a year earlier, a roughly 75% decline, according to data from the Planning Ministry and a policy brief by the Institute of National Planning (INP). The decline pushed Egypt far below the 20%–30% savings level typically seen in emerging markets.

"The drop in savings in Egypt is not due to a lack of planning for the future, but rather because the cost of the present has exceeded people's capacity to endure," banking veteran and Alraya Consulting and Training Managing Partner Hany Aboul Fotouh told Enterprise. "A large portion of families no longer have anything left to save in the first place."

The INP report highlighted structural changes in consumer behavior, including the rapid expansion of installment–based purchasing and buy–now–pay–later platforms, which have encouraged credit-financed consumption rather than savings.

This pattern persists despite headline macro indicators showing some resilience. While GDP growth reached 5% in the first quarter of 2026 and unemployment declined to 6.3% in 2025, business activity remains subdued: the Purchasing Managers' Index stood at 47.1 in May, below the expansion threshold, and industrial output contracted by 2%.

ALCAZAR ENERGY TO RUN GULF OF SUEZ WIND FARM

The New and Renewable Energy Authority, Egyptian Electricity Transmission Co. (EETC), and energy developer AlcaZar Energy have agreed to invest in, operate, and purchase power from a 580-megawatt wind farm in the Gulf of Suez, with a total investment of $420 million.

The project will be developed in the Gabal El-Zeit area on the Red Sea coast. Under the agreement, AlcaZar Energy will establish a local company to finance, build, operate, and manage the facility in line with state regulations. The EETC will purchase the electricity generated through a long-term agreement to help ensure stable revenue for the project.

AlcaZar will also oversee operations, maintenance, and necessary upgrades while maintaining the plant's installed capacity of 580 megawatts.

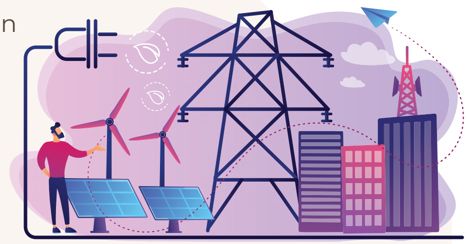
The project is part of the government's strategy to increase private-sector involvement in energy development and accelerate renewable power generation, highlighting its role in national energy goals. The country aims to boost renewables to 45% of its electricity mix, reducing dependence on fossil fuels while expanding wind and solar capacity.

FINANCE PACKAGE TARGETS RENEWABLE ENERGY INTEGRATION

Egypt and the European Union are deepening their strategic partnership in renewable energy, with a financing package of up to EUR 690 million to upgrade and expand the Egyptian electricity network. The package includes a EUR 600 million loan from the European Investment Bank's development arm, EIB Global, with up to EUR 90 million in grants from the European Commission.

The financing package will support the integration of 22 gigawatts (GW) of renewable energy capacity into the grid by 2030, enough to supply 10 million households with electricity. The project will be led by the state-owned Egyptian Electricity Transmission Co. (EETC).

"This agreement reflects the strength of the partnership between Egypt and the EU and our shared determination to advance the green transition," said Badr Abdelatty, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Egyptian Expatriates. "We are taking an important step to modernize our electricity network, strengthen energy security, and create new opportunities for sustainable growth. This is the kind of practical cooperation that brings real benefits to our economy and our people."



STANDARD CHARTERED SEES GRADUAL RECOVERY FOR EGYPT

British bank Standard Chartered has forecast that Egypt's GDP growth will gradually recover to reach 4.7% in FY 2027-2028, supported by improving macroeconomic conditions and continued reform momentum.

The bank revised its FY2026-2027 GDP growth forecast to 3.6%, citing ongoing domestic and external headwinds, but maintained a stronger recovery outlook for the subsequent fiscal year.

Long-term drivers of growth, according to the bank, include Egypt's strategic location and diversified economy, which support investment in the country and consolidate its role as a hub along major trade corridors.

Standard Chartered expects policy interest rates to continue easing through 2028 as macroeconomic stability improves. Lower borrowing costs are expected to support credit growth, financing activity, and private-sector investment.

Mohammed Gad, CEO and head of coverage at Standard Chartered Egypt, said the country remains one of the region's most strategically important and diversified economies.

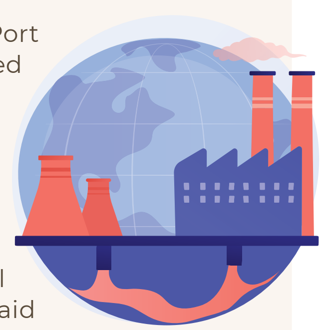
CANADIAN COMPANY PLANS TEXTILE PROJECT IN EAST PORT SAID

Canadian textile manufacturer Avelon has inked an agreement with East Port Said Development Co. to establish a facility to produce technical textiles used in construction.

A statement by the Suez Canal Economic Zone said the first phase of the project will cover 24,183 square meters (about 6 acres) and will involve investments totaling $27 million. The project's entire production will be exported.

The investment plan will include a second expansion phase, still under development.

Walid Gamal El-Din, chairman of the General Authority for the Suez Canal Economic Zone, said Avelon's project reflects the success of the East Port Said Industrial Zone in attracting high-value, export-oriented industrial investments.



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

With prices rising noticeably since 2022, more Egyptian families are resorting to installment payment plans to buy products they desire. Meanwhile, AI will make non-banks more appealing.

by **Tamer Hafez**

Egyptian household and individual consumption as a percentage of nominal GDP has remained consistently high despite global and regional health (COVID-19) and geopolitical volatility in Ukraine, the Gaza Strip, and Iran.

Data curator CIEC Data estimated private consumption accounted for 94.1% of nominal GDP in 2025, up from 92.5% in 2024. That is the second-highest percentage on record, after August 2024, when consumption reached 97.1% of nominal GDP. Furthermore, consumption since the second half of 2024 has been higher than historical figures, which had not exceeded 87% since 2015, according to CIEC Data.

This jump in consumption is due to annual inflation rates exceeding the Central Bank's target of 7% plus or minus 2% since April 2022, when inflation rose to 9% and then reached 13.1%. Inflation also remained above 25% for 19 consecutive months. Interest rates stand at 19%, compared with 8.25% in 2021, raising the cost of borrowing. Lastly, the pound's exchange rate rose from EGP 15.7 per dollar in 2020 to over EGP 50 per dollar in 2026, with Egypt historically importing between 60% and 65% of its needs.

To cope with rising prices, local consumers have increasingly turned to borrowing and installment plans. Such loans mostly came from commercial banks, with the borrower's income as collateral. In the past six years, however, consumers' preferences have shifted to non-banks.

"Younger generations have become closer to the idea of 'buy now, pay later.'" Hany Aboul Fotouh, a managing partner at Alraya Consulting and Training, told local media in June. "When the cost of goods rises continuously, delaying a purchase becomes riskier than buying on installment because people fear tomorrow's prices more than today's installments."

Going forward, non-bank lenders will be reshaped by tightened regulations, AI adoption, and pressure to remain the lender of choice for increasingly tech-savvy and financially strapped local buyers.

Preferred lenders

In 2025, the Egyptian Financial Regulatory Authority (FRA) reported non-bank lending by all 2,532 registered non-banks reached EGP 1.4 trillion ($28.2 billion), with more than 64 million clients registered with at least one locally licensed non-bank.

Furthermore, "the number of new [non-bank] account holders doubled during the first four months of 2026 ... compared to ... the same time last year," according to state-owned Ahram English.

According to CBE data, there are 53.8 million account holders across 36 commercial banks and CBE-regulated financial institutions, including traditional commercial bank deposits, Egypt Post accounts, mobile wallets, and prepaid cards.

The near-parity of household and individual lending values between banks and non-banks, along with the latter's notably large footprint, "carries significant risks," Pamela Danziger, founder and president of Unity Marketing, noted in November. "Retailers face higher merchant fees, while vulnerable consumers are prone to overspending, increased debt, and missed payments." Non-bank lending is a "ticking time bomb [that is] leading to potential financial disaster for all involved," she said.

Rules of access

The CBE's regulatory framework is newer and noticeably more restrictive than the FRA's. The former law was updated in 2020, replacing the 2003 version. It enforces all requirements related to money laundering, combating the financing of terrorism, and Basel III capital adequacy, while working toward Basel IV for all banks.

Additionally, individuals or organizations seeking to own a 10% or higher stake in a commercial bank must obtain CBE approval. Digital-only banks, such as onebank, must have a minimum capital of EGP 2 billion for general digital services and EGP 4 billion for financing large-scale companies, according to research from AmCham Egypt.

Digital bank license "applicants must submit detailed feasibility studies covering cybersecurity, IT infrastructure, target segments, and product strategies," AmCham Egypt research noted. Lastly, "successful applicants must establish the digital bank within a year from receiving preliminary approval from the CBE."

The CBE also requires traditional and digital-only commercial bank owners "to be an Egyptian joint-stock company or a branch of a foreign digital bank." Furthermore, "the digital bank's shareholders must include a financial institution, which must hold the majority share in the venture."

For non-banks, the FRA enforces a 2009 law that covers all local activities, including capital markets, insurance, mortgage finance, financial leasing, factoring, securitization, and microfinance.

These regulations are deliberately less restrictive than those of the CBE, thus providing space for fintech startups and micro, small, and medium enterprises to innovate.

There are also no restrictions on the ownership structure of a non-bank enterprise. In 2026, the CBE allowed commercial banks to wholly own non-banks, whereas previously they had been limited to a 40% stake.

Lastly, the FRA requires registered companies to regularly provide updates on their internal operations to ensure they strictly adhere to authorized contract forms.

Anchoring non-banks

This regulatory gap means non-banks can lend to customers whom commercial banks deem too risky. That is a problem for banks, as they lend to non-banks, using the latter's lending portfolio size as a criterion for approving loans.

To reduce commercial banks' exposure to non-bank risks, the CBE announced in May that commercial banks will no longer grant or renew credit facilities to non-bank lenders unless they are legally recognized by the CBE. Also, they must report their customer data to both the Central Bank's information network and the Egyptian Credit Bureau (I-Score).

The CBE also instructed commercial banks that already have open accounts with non-bank lenders to sell or settle this debt if the non-bank doesn't comply with these reporting requirements by August.

The CBE clarified these limitations in its official announcement, attributing the decision to the non-compliance of several non-bank entities with previously issued credit data reporting requirements.

Another potentially impactful move came when the CBE gave commercial banks free rein to fully own non-bank lending companies. That could be a sign that the CBE wants to consolidate the non-bank lending market into a handful of large players that it regulates through their parent companies.

One major market force driving this shift to AI is "customers increasingly expecting a more digital experience." Meanwhile, "[commercial] banks [are] moving down the consumer pyramid [where non-banks mostly operate]."

Technology is also attracting new players, such as "digital-native fintechs and e-commerce majors," which are "competing aggressively" with non-bank startups.

The result is increasing pressure to offer "alternative lending models" that must comply with "tighter … regulatory scrutiny" and "higher …central bank interest rates," noted McKinsey.

New services

The adoption of AI and other emerging technologies would influence non-banks' financing models. "They can explore a range of solutions, including securitization, co-lending arrangements, alternative funding sources, and more, to equip themselves for the new paradigm," said McKinsey. One prominent example is "creating lending portfolios committed to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) objectives."

AI could also change non-banks' product positioning. McKinsey said lenders can "expand into new high-ticket categories … such as luxury apparel, aesthetic treatments and procedures, and home fitness equipment."

Another new AI-enabled non-bank service is "offering open lines of credit," McKinsey noted. That is unlike commercial banks, which approve individual lending on a case-by-case basis. "Open lines of credit … can adjust limits and repayment terms based on user behavior in real time."

Next-gen non-banks

Given AI's increased popularity and increasingly transformative capabilities, the stakes are rising for non-banks to grow quickly while maintaining acceptable risk levels. "In some emerging markets, they provide more than a third of retail lending," McKinsey noted in an April 2025 paper. "In some markets, they supply more than 80% of lending for retail segments such as automotive and consumer durables."

By integrating emerging technologies into decision-making, non-banks gain a significant competitive advantage, enabling them to "unleash new levels of efficiency, personalization, and customer engagement," noted McKinsey.

Another approach sees "consumer finance players ... develop bundled solutions, such as four-in-one products that allow consumers to access a single credit line via a savings account, digital wallet, credit card or prepaid store card," said McKinsey. "Consumer finance companies have achieved significant success in offering debt consolidation and debt transfer from less favorable finance products."

Ops update

Non-banks are also likely to change how they "acquire" new customers and retain existing ones. "Ownership of the full marketing and sales funnel, omnichannel integration and digital marketing" gives non-banks control over communication and customer data, said McKinsey.

That enables non-banks to "integrate the customer experience among channels," the consultancy said. This includes "the company's communication plan, from landing pages and channels to messaging and delivery."

This content must be "devised and executed based on microsegment personas to achieve a high conversion ratio." McKinsey highlighted the target market's age bracket as one differentiator. "[While] customers in every geography pass through multiple touchpoints before closing a purchase, [younger audiences] increasingly expect seamless, hassle-free handoffs between channels."

Getting this messaging, customer experience, and engagement right allows non-banks to "scale new customer acquisition with digital marketing," McKinsey noted.

Underwriting is another operation that will change due to AI. "Efficient and accurate underwriting will be a key to competitive lending for consumer finance players. Implement real-time, customer-level underwriting," McKinsey said. "To embed point-of-sale–based lending in digital platforms, consumer finance players need an underwriting engine that can make go/no-go decisions in seconds."

Collections and recovery will also change because of AI. That includes "deploying smart customer microsegmentation," McKinsey noted. "Gen AI can improve the efficiency of collection processes by supporting agents."

In practice, AI would "track every call, interpret context, identify patterns, and analyze sentiment to give agents timely and actionable feedback, significantly improving operational performance and service quality."

Lastly, to retain customer loyalty and, with it, market prestige, McKinsey recommended "using preapproval scorecards to generate repeat business [and] reengaging customers with hooks and prompts."

Ultimately, while using technology is crucial to the future of non-banks and consumer finance, it "isn't just digital; It's also Darwinian," McKinsey stressed. "Companies that evolve, embracing AI and hyper-personalization, will thrive in this new ecosystem. As for the rest, the extinction event for outdated lending models has already begun." ■

ENTREPRENEURS' DILEMMA

For aspiring Egyptian entrepreneurs, securing a franchise, instead of building their own brand, can be a good path to owning a business. However, it has its limitations and challenges.

by **Rania Hassan**

A May survey from WayMaker Journal, a publication, captures today's work reality among Gen Z (aged 30 and under). The survey found 69% want to start a business, "not because they believe entrepreneurship is easy [but] because owning a business is the one thing that feels like control right now," the analysis said.

The survey noted Gen Zers put "marriage on hold, relocation on hold, [and] career changes on hold. But entrepreneurship … is not on hold. The dream was never the house. It was always freedom. Gen Z found a different door."

One way to realize the ambition of owning a business is the franchise model, in which small companies pay fees to multinationals to produce and sell the latter's products or services, while the franchisee typically retains nearly all decision-making responsibility and net profit.

For aspiring business owners, the dilemma is whether to build a brand from scratch or choose the franchise model, relying on the franchisor's know-how, exposure, patents, and expertise to attract customers, but remaining confined to specific markets.

Local boom coming

In Egypt, franchise activity is primed for a boom. "We are seeing growth in franchise activity for the first time since COVID-19," Hatem Zaki, chairman of the Egyptian Franchise Development Association (EFDA), told Al Borsa News in January.

To capitalize on the opportunity, the EFDA launched Egypt's first "accelerator" solely for franchisees. The first batch comprises 10 companies, one of which is state-owned.

Zaki also noted the EDFA is developing a draft law regulating franchise activity. "The law aims to protect the rights of the state, the franchisor and the franchisee, and to regulate registration, disclosure and contract termination processes, thereby establishing a clear legal framework for the activity for the first time," he said.

In December, Basel Rahmy, CEO of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority, announced plans to organize Egypt's first franchise conference in cooperation with Saudi Arabia. It aims to match franchisors and franchisees and raise awareness of the franchise economy.

These efforts come as the local market lacks reliable franchise statistics. "The last comprehensive survey was conducted in 2005. However, current estimates suggest about 1,300 franchise systems operating in the Egyptian market," Zaki said. That lack of data can turn off both franchisors and franchisees.

Good for society

According to The Economist, franchise business models "have long been sneered at … derided by economists as little more than a cheap growth tactic in which franchisees stumped up the capital to open new outlets. Critics claim that franchisees are not 'true' entrepreneurs … but merely glorified store managers obsessed with the illusion of being their own boss."

Nevertheless, franchising has proven its economic worth over the years, as most franchisees are startups or small companies. "Small businesses are the backbone of most communities, and they provide high levels of economic value to the towns and cities in which they are located," noted Neighborly Franchising, a franchise company, in September. "Because franchise businesses are small businesses, as a franchise owner, you will likely become an integral part of your local economy, supplying essential services and employing community members."

These franchise companies also "pay town and city taxes and create new jobs," said Neighborly Franchising. "Taxes support many community goods and functions, including schools, road repairs and maintenance, emergency services, parks and recreation, and other vital community services."

Endangering local brands

According to Rick Grossman, a franchisee with 49 branches across 19 U.S. states, franchising is better for entrepreneurs who want to run a business rather than build one around their original product or service idea. "Very few people have the natural ability or expertise to be efficient at all aspects of running a successful business," he explained. "That is where the franchisor's experience comes into play."

Franchisors offer "a structure for launching, operating and growing a business," Grossman told Entrepreneur, a publication. "The operational and marketing procedures, coupled with comprehensive operations manuals and training programs, are designed to enable franchise owners to earn more and spend less time and effort than would be otherwise required to open and operate a similar business on their own."

The second factor that makes the franchise model easier than starting a business from scratch is "collaboration among franchisees breeds success," Grossman said. "Though each business is independently owned and managed, all franchisees share in the collaborative benefits of the organization through the support and oversight of the franchisor."

Some of these positives include access to "group advertising resources not typically available to small, independent business owners; owning your own business and making day-to-day decisions … guided by the experience of a successful business enterprise; [and] the ability to sell products and services to markets that company-owned outlets [can't] serve."

Other benefits include "operational support from the franchisor [in] financing, accounting, employee training, and operational procedures," accessing the same suppliers as "all franchises will share the same interior and exterior physical appearance, the same product, the same service, product quality, training, [and] brand awareness."

Local brands advantage

On the other hand, building a new brand can offer several advantages over franchising. First is "flexibility, [which] has always been a hot button for entrepreneurs who exchange that stability of a 'real job' for the freedom of being their own boss," Grossman said. In franchises, the franchisor must maintain product and service quality and identity.

Second, local brand owners don't share revenue with a franchisor. However, Grossman was "surprised" that money "is seldom the most important," saying, "We know many people who have left huge salaries behind, because they were miserable, to ... launch a business."

Lastly, local brand owners have a better "status" than franchise owners. This "is an all-encompassing category that includes not only titles and positions, but more importantly, the feeling of purpose one has and being a part of something significant," he said.

Starting a franchise also requires more up-front money than starting a local brand. Franchise fees, hiring standards, and office space design, quality, aesthetics, and equipment must meet franchisor standards. Local brand owners can dispense with these costs in the initial phase.

Also, the odds of franchising success depend on startup capital. "The smaller the initial investment, the higher the rate of failure," according to Investopedia, an investment platform. When starting a new brand, success usually depends more on the products and services offered.

Owning a franchise also imposes expansion limits, as the franchisee may lack the capacity or the franchisor's approval to expand beyond certain markets or regions. For example, in Egypt, Manfoods is a McDonald's franchisee with no operations outside the local market, since other franchisees operate the fast-food chain in each Middle Eastern and African market.

Two exceptions are Coldwell Banker Egypt and Cinnabon Egypt. They are franchisees of U.S.-based brands and also operate in neighboring countries via franchise agreements.

However, local brand owners can grow as freely as their business models allow. The list of fast-moving goods companies in Egypt includes Edita Food Industries, Juhayna Food Industries, Domty (Arabian Food Industries), Spiro Spathis, and Auf Egypt (owner of Abu Auf). Chemical companies include Eva Cosmetics, Egyptian Company for Cosmetics, and Nuit Fragrances, among others. They all operate directly in markets across MENA, especially the GCC.

Additionally, local brands are more likely to become franchisors themselves. Examples include fast-food chains like Zooba, Buffalo Burger, Mo'mem, and Tseppas. As well as cafe chains Cilantro and Beano's.

Several local preschool and school brands have expanded in the region through franchise agreements, including Trillion (The Montessori House), Petals Preschools, and CIRA Education.

A smart choice

Ultimately, choosing between a franchise and a local brand comes down to an entrepreneur's risk tolerance. "Small business considerations are critical when deciding between starting your own business and investing in a franchise," noted Neighborly Franchise. One important metric is the success rate of franchises versus startup businesses, it added.

According to the U.S. National Franchise Association, "Franchises have a higher success rate, with over 90% of franchises still operating after five years, compared to only about 50% of independent businesses."

A PricewaterhouseCoopers report in April said a "hybrid approach [is] emerging" in the Middle East. This strategy sees companies "operate directly in key flagship markets, while franchising in others where speed, partner access and capital efficiency are more advantageous."

Others are "developing new mechanisms to franchise personalized and premium food and beverage concepts while maintaining a higher [than usual for a franchise] degree of control over quality and service," the PwC report said.

Ultimately, the franchise business model is open to the region. "As competition intensifies and consumer expectations continue to evolve, the question for brands is no longer whether to expand into the Middle East, but how deliberately they choose to do so," the PwC report noted. "The optimal mix continues to evolve."

THE RIGHT PARTNER

Being successful as a franchisee requires carefully choosing — if not auditing — the franchisor.

"Franchising creates an incredible opportunity for people to grow wealth … for franchisees [and] franchisors," said John Henning, an independent director of franchise development for several brands, wrote on LinkedIn in January. "Franchisees invest capital, time, and effort. The franchisee builds equity through a growing, cash-flowing business; wealth compounds across the entire system." However, each franchisee must choose the right franchisor.

Support partnership

First, a franchisor must provide "profit-centered support [in] every aspect of [the] business, from onboarding to marketing to field coaching," Henning said. All these activities "should lead back to one goal: Franchisee profitability."

Second, franchisors need to offer franchisees "transparent financial education," as "many first-time franchisees are great operators, but not yet great financial managers," he said. "Teach them to think like business owners, not just managers."

Lastly, franchisors need to provide "scalable growth pathways," Henning stressed. "The best systems help franchisees expand intelligently. Whether through multi-unit ownership, territory expansion, or adjacent service offerings, provide a clear roadmap for how top performers can multiply their success."

Choose carefully

Jeff Dudan, former CEO and founder of Homefront Brands, a franchisee with over 200 branches in the United States, emphasized the importance of "finding a franchise with good leadership," he told Yahoo Finance. "In selecting a franchise to invest in, first look at the people who are running the franchise business."

Inconsistencies in how the business operates or frequent employee turnover can signal issues with the franchisor's management, said Dudan.

Reviewing the franchisor's financials is also critical. "It's important to know exactly what you are buying and how the existing [franchisees] are doing financially," he said.

Following rules

"To maximize your return on investment in a franchise, the most important thing is to follow the plan put forth by the franchisor to the letter," said Dudan. "The franchisor has developed proven processes that have been tested over time, all of which are important to your success."

Additionally, franchisees need to start small, then expand. "The first step is always to invest in a single unit and open and operate the business to ensure that it will be a good fit for you," Dudan said. "When you are successfully operating your first location, you should then discuss with your franchisor how to expand your business within the franchise network."

Lastly, Dudan said succeeding as a franchisee means working within the franchise network and standing out to the franchisor. "It is important to be a good citizen within the franchise network."

That requires "attending all events, including regional training, monthly all-calls and the annual convention," Dudan added. "Be willing to collaborate with other franchisees because a rising tide lifts all boats, and the better everyone performs, the greater the equity and goodwill of your franchise location." ■

REVISITING THE BRAIN DRAIN

As global competition for talent heats up, Egypt faces a critical crossroads: manage remittances while avoiding the loss of its best minds.

Already ranked 15th out of 193 countries as a top exporter of labor, Egypt's position, as outlined in a January Ataraxis report, lags behind several African peers, highlighting the untapped potential of its workforce.

Meanwhile, despite government efforts to stem the outflow of skilled professionals, progress remains uneven. Some industries are stabilizing; however, many continue to lose talent at an unsustainable rate.

With brain drain a reality, ambitious Egyptians looking abroad should target sectors on the cusp of AI transformation that still need human expertise to manage the transition.

Ultimately, Egypt's priority should not be to quickly halt the exodus, but to manage it by ensuring that education meets international standards, thereby helping young people find lucrative careers both abroad and in their home country.

By **Tamer Hafez**

TALENT-EXPORT CENTRAL

Egypt, which a recent survey ranks as the world's 15th-largest exporter of talent, still faces stiff competition from other African nations.

Remittances are a crucial stabilizing factor for the Egyptian economy, accounting for $41.5 billion last year alone. That is a massive amount, given that tourism contributed $18 billion, FDI $11 billion, and the Suez Canal $3.6 billion.

Remittances are also growing faster than other revenue sources. According to the Central Bank of Egypt (CBE), the first nine months of fiscal year 2025/2026 saw transfers jump 32% over the previous year.

These inflows are less affected by geopolitical and geoeconomic volatility than other sources. "They act as a shock absorber to Egypt's economy," noted Nour Adbellhamin, a reporter for state-owned Ahram English, in June.

A January report by Ataraxis, a recruitment, outsourcing, and workforce management company, ranked Egypt 15th out of 193 nations for talent and labor exports. "With a total score of 81.2, Egypt is a high-value hidden gem for outsourcing ... offering some of the most competitive rates globally for skilled technical talent," the report said.

However, the country still needs to address several issues Ataraxis ranking identifies as crucial to becoming Africa's most attractive source of talent and labor.

Egypt's analysis

One factor the report considers is an exporting nation's location. Egypt's "strategic location bridges Europe, the Middle East and Africa, offering a compelling value proposition for companies seeking high-quality technical and back-office support."

For U.S. and Asian clients, Egypt "provides a strong base for 'follow-the-sun' support for ... companies, particularly for late-night and early-morning coverage."

The second factor is labor costs, which account for 52.8% of the final score. The report measures "relative wages and compensation expenses for remote specialists, cost-effectiveness compared to other countries and impacts on overall hiring budget and scalability."

Egypt scored 98 out of 100 points in the labor cost category. "The country produces over 738,000 graduates annually from higher education institutions [and there is a] strong emphasis on STEM and language studies with significant clusters in business, law and health, ensuring a steady stream of 'work-ready' talent for the global market."

Egypt scored 60 out of 100 in English language proficiency, which accounts for 20% of the total grade. The report considers "ability to communicate effectively in English, reduced miscommunication in cross-border teams [and] supporting faster onboarding and collaboration."

The Ataraxis report explained the country "maintains a 'low' to 'moderate' proficiency level, [yet] within the outsourcing sector (Cairo and Alexandria), proficiency is significantly higher, often reaching 'high' status in specialized business process outsourcing hubs."

Egypt scored 70 out of 100 for talent availability, which is 17.5% of the total grade. The report's focus was on the "size and skill depth of the local workforce, availability of specialists for specific roles [and] ability to scale teams as business needs grow."

The country “boasts a robust and expandable workforce with a total labor force of 34.8 million individuals, of which 32.6 million are actively employed,” the report said. “This talent pool is supported by a growing professional community of several million searchable profiles on LinkedIn.”

The least crucial elements are “digital infrastructure” and “business, legal and political stability” in the talent’s home country. Each accounts for 5% of the total score. The former factor covers “Reliability of internet and mobile networks [and] access to modern technology and cloud services,” the report said. Egypt scored 70 points.

Business stability focuses on “predictability of local regulations and labor laws [and] political and economic stability affecting operations.” Egypt scored 40 points. However, the report added, “business risk level [is] low to moderate. Economic reforms and a massive push for digital exports have stabilized the environment.”

The most likely jobs Egyptian expats secure include full-stack engineer, mobile developer, data analyst, accountant, financial analyst, digital marketing manager, and bilingual virtual assistant. “These roles leverage Egypt’s growing reputation for technical excellence and its status as a competitive, multilingual hub for the EMEA region,” the report noted.

While Egypt ranks among “top-tier” countries, the report is concerned about “currency volatility and regional geopolitical shifts [as well as] regulatory complexity ... particularly regarding bureaucratic processes.” Yet, “these are generally manageable for service-based and remote-first operations through the use of local partners or Employers of record.”

Africa’s competition

Egypt faces stiff competition from other African countries. South Africa ranks fifth, though it trails Egypt in labor costs — scoring 88 out of 100 versus Egypt’s 98 — and in digital infrastructure, scoring 40 versus Egypt’s 70. It surpasses Egypt’s scores in English proficiency (100 vs. 60) and business stability (60 vs. 40). It ties Egypt’s score in talent availability (70).

“South Africa is a cost-efficient, high-English outsourcing destination with strong communication standards and a solid professional workforce,” the report said. However, downsides include “electricity reliability and regulatory complexity that present moderate risk.” Yet, “it remains a compelling option for companies prioritizing customer-facing roles and European time zone alignment.”

Nigeria is the second-highest-ranked African country, reaching sixth, versus Egypt’s 15th place. It matches Egypt’s scores in labor costs (98) and business stability (40). It tops Egypt in English proficiency (90 to 6000, while falling short in digital infrastructure (30 vs. 70) and talent availability (60 vs. 70).

“Nigeria offers exceptional cost efficiency and strong English proficiency, supported by a large, young workforce,” said the report. “While digital infrastructure, power reliability, and regulatory risk remain considerations, it is a compelling option for companies prioritizing savings and English-based support, admin and finance roles.”

The third African country ranked ahead of Egypt is Kenya — 11th in the report. Kenya’s labor costs score is lower than Egypt's (95 points versus 98). In talent availability and digital infrastructure, Kenya scores 50 in each, versus Egypt’s 70. It outscores Egypt in English proficiency (90 vs. 60) and business stability (50 vs. 40).

“Kenya is a 'top-tier value' destination, offering some of the most competitive labor costs globally without sacrificing English fluency,” said the report. “While infrastructure and talent scale are still developing compared to more mature hubs, its rapid digital transformation makes it an ideal spot for companies seeking high-quality, cost-effective technical and support talent.”

Ghana ranks 17th, two places behind Egypt. It scored the same in business stability (40), but couldn’t match Egypt in labor costs (91 vs. 98) and talent availability (60 vs. 70). However, Ghana prevailed in English proficiency (90 vs. 60).

“Ghana is a great hidden gem for outsourcing,” said the report. “You get a huge win on labor costs and English skills. It is a safe place to start hiring in Africa, especially if you want to save money while still getting high-quality work.”

Intangibles

Alongside these factors, there are also non-measurable influences on how easy it is to export talent and labor.

The first category of these qualitative forces concerns financial and operational costs. “Potential risks of outsourcing include exposing organizations to increased costs, breach of data security and a loss of institutional knowledge,” the report said. “This can result in loss of revenue and loss of competitive advantage. Political instability and conflicts in offshore locations can significantly impact business operations.”

Another intangible factor is cultural differences, which “can sometimes lead to communication and collaboration challenges,” the report noted. “Diverse work cultures may result in misunderstandings, affecting project delivery and overall efficiency.”

Lastly, “different countries have varying laws and regulations governing data privacy, labor practices and intellectual property rights,” the report said. “Failure to comply with these regulations can lead to legal complications and reputational damage.”

REVERSING THE TIDE?

There are signs Egypt's brain drain might be turning around. However, this shift isn't necessarily successful across all susceptible professions.

Losing high-level talent has become a serious concern for Egypt, so much so that House of Representatives members in April tasked the Defense and National Security Committee to "discuss the issue of brain drain and its implications for Egyptian national security, in light of the growing challenge posed by the migration of skilled scientific and professional talents abroad," according to local media.

The committee found "significant migration of ... young scientists, researchers, doctors and engineers amid the greater job opportunities and financial and research resources offered by [other] countries," according to state-owned Ahram English.

However, TheGlobalEconomy.com, a research portal, paints a less pessimistic picture. It shows brain drain risk declined from 62% in 2007 to an all-time low of 44% in 2015. It spiked to 52% in 2018, then rose to 53% by 2020. Between 2021 and 2024, Egypt's brain drain risk dropped to 47%.

A deeper look reveals brain-drain disparities across professions. Meanwhile, remote work is decoupling employment from geography, shaping how and where talent is lost or gained.

Drain reversal

Education in Egypt is seeing a decline in brain-drain risks, especially at top-tier universities. "Our strategy of increasing the number of international university branches in Egypt has led to a noticeable decline in student motivations to enroll in overseas branches," then Minister of Higher Education Khaled Abdel Ghaffar told the media in 2022.

In January, six state-owned and two private universities ranked between the 405th and 917th positions out of more than 32,000 universities surveyed by the Webometrics Ranking of World Universities 2026. In total, 83 Egyptian higher education institutions ranked in the top 5,000.

These reputable rankings are enabling local institutions to compete and collaborate with international universities.

In August 2025, state-owned Ahram English reported that state-owned Cairo and Alexandria universities would open overseas branches that teach local curricula. The former will open in the U.A.E., Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, accepting students starting with the 2026/2027 academic year.

Alexandria University will have a UAE campus offering programs in health sciences, engineering, computer science, business, and the humanities. The university is also "preparing to launch interdisciplinary programs at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, in addition to dual-degree programs developed in cooperation with leading international universities," reported Ahram English.

Meanwhile, nearly all local universities, whether state-owned or private, have active international partnerships, meaning graduates receive dual certification from local and overseas universities.

By 2030, the government aims to achieve an education brain gain by attracting 200,000 foreign students to study at Egyptian universities, up from 30,000 in 2024, according to the latest statistics from the Ministry of Higher Education. That jump would mean foreign students accounting for 6% of total higher education enrollments by 2030, up from 3% in 2024.

Work in progress

In Egypt, software development is a profession in transition. According to a 2024 paper from the Egyptian Center for Economic Studies (ECES), "The software industry in Egypt suffers from emigration of qualified experts to international markets."

One reason for the drain is training is "not leveraged to acquire new skills [to] cope with rapid technological developments," ECES noted.

The second reason is the country's elevated piracy activity. "Piracy rates decreased from 61% in 2015 to about 59% [in 2023]." That is "higher than the global average (37%) and compared to a number of competing countries, led by Saudi Arabia [and] the UAE," the paper stated.

Other drivers of brain drain in software development include "weak banking financing," "weak use of venture capital by SMEs," and "weak demand in the local market [for] the software industry," said the ECES.

In its 2026 report, Portulans Institute ranked Egypt 88th out of 127 in its Network Readiness Index, which evaluates how well countries apply and leverage ICT. In the 2021 report, Egypt ranked 72nd out of 130 nations. The institute is an independent nonprofit, nonpartisan research and educational organization based in Washington, D.C.

In the coming years, this brain drain could reverse as local software developers find it harder to secure jobs at overseas tech giants, which are increasingly relying on artificial intelligence to replace humans.

Crunchbase, a news curator, reported: “At least 127,000 workers at U.S.-based tech companies were laid off in mass job cuts in 2025.” Companies involved included Intel, Microsoft, and Amazon.

Meanwhile, in Egypt, the ICT sector has been growing by about 15% annually since 2018 (over five times the GDP growth rate), according to government data. Then, ICT Minister Amr Talaat said the sector's contribution to GDP rose from 3.2% to 6% between 2018 and 2025.

Also, the government's AI Strategy, announced in 2021, helped the country move up the Government AI Readiness Index, from 111th to 51st out of 195 countries between 2019 and 2025.

This growth did not reduce local tech companies' need for employees. According to the IT Industry Development Authority, the sector employed 350,000 workers as of November, with plans to add 75,000 jobs in 2026 (a 21. 4% increase).

Continued drain

The profession that continues to see rising brain drain is physicians. Of the 220,000 registered doctors as of April 2025, around 120,000 work abroad, according to data from the Doctors' Syndicate.

Meanwhile, a 2024 survey by AUC Knowledge Fountain showed that 66.4% of physicians working in Egypt intended to leave. “The factor that had the highest impact on their decision was work satisfaction, where the less satisfied physicians were 20 times more likely to leave.”

The survey analysis classified Egypt's doctor brain drain as driven by “push” or “pull” factors. “In general, it seems there are more push considerations for leaving Egypt than pull factors for moving to a specific country.”

Push factors include “poor healthcare facilities, unfavorable working conditions, low-quality training and limited educational opportunities, low remuneration [and] sociopolitical and economic issues,” the AUC survey noted.

Pull factors include “high-quality training and educational opportunities, and well-developed health systems, in addition to fair and rewarding systems in the destination country. [They] are the main factors that pull Egyptian physicians to different high-income countries,” the survey explained.

Brain-drain influencer

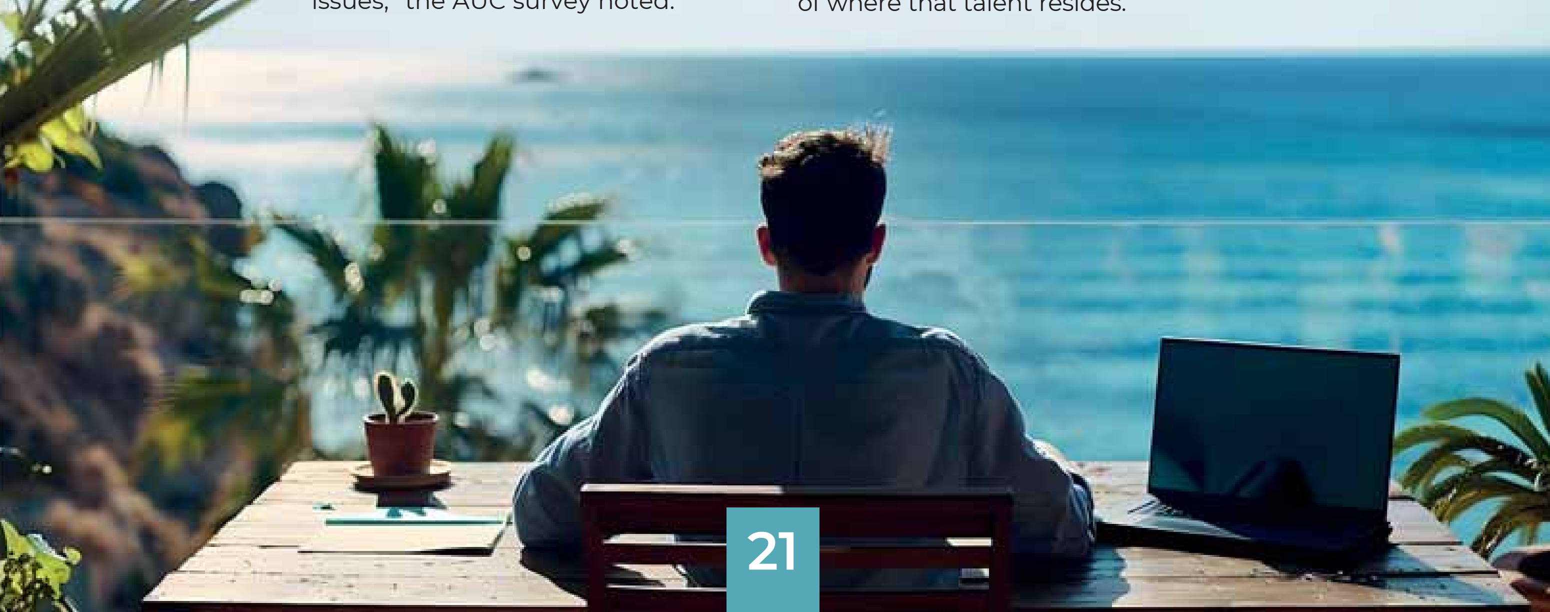
Remote work also affects brain drain. According to a July 2025 paper by African Liberty, a non-profit advocacy group, the continent's continued brain drain is partially due to its “failure to adapt to remote work. In an era where people can work from anywhere in the world, African countries are missing the chance to retain their talents.”

Egypt modified its labor law in 2025 to “formally recognize remote work and other non-traditional employment formats as legitimate and regulated forms of employment,” said Frédéric Soliman, of Soliman, Hashish & Partners Law Firm. “[It] focuses on cross-border employment.”

The law includes “equal access to minimum wage guarantees, vocational training, skill development programs, and collective bargaining rights.” It offers no incentives to work or hire remotely.

However, cross-border regulatory alignment is crucial for domestic employees and employers to maximize the role of remote work in reducing brain drain. “Addressing the problem of brain drain in a remote work era requires bold, continent-wide policies such as those provided in the African Continental Free Trade Area,” noted the African Liberty paper. “Countries should establish a harmonized tax incentive scheme coordinated through the AfCFTA framework.”

Such coordination means “countries can reward companies for hiring remote African talent, regardless of where that talent resides.”



RIGHT SECTOR, BOOMING CAREER

For youth to enjoy promising, lucrative careers, they will need to work in sectors that benefit greatly from artificial intelligence yet still require a human workforce. Four sectors stand out.

The world has grown increasingly concerned about artificial intelligence (AI) taking over human jobs since ChatGPT launched in 2022. That is because it can understand natural human language (written and spoken), search the internet for data, generate narratives from queries, solve mathematical problems, and make forecasts.

Those fears are partially founded. “While 92 million jobs might be eliminated by 2030, 170 million new roles will be created because of AI,” the World Economic Forum (WEF) said in February.

Additionally, many existing professions will change. “Over the next two to three years, 50% to 55% of jobs ... will be reshaped by AI,” according to the Boston Consulting Group in April. “For many employees, this will mean that they retain the same or similar roles, but face radically new expectations for how they work and what they produce.”

For youth in low- and middle-income nations pursuing jobs in wealthy, developed nations, knowing which sectors AI will transform while still needing a human workforce could be the key to lucrative careers.

Healthcare

AI is already used in healthcare for early symptom detection, conversing with patients to identify illnesses, interpreting medical tests and scans, handling administrative work, and even planning ambulance routes, according to a WEF paper from August.

AI is increasingly used in commercial medical devices, including those measuring blood sugar, blood pressure, and heart rate. “People who are generally healthy can use self-monitoring devices to optimize their mental and physical health,” the WEF noted. “Those with health issues will have access to a wide range of digital solutions.”

However, it's highly risky for AI to make treatment decisions without human oversight. “AI could potentially speed up [medical tests] ... it could also provide unreliable or biased information,” said the WEF. As a result, human oversight is essential.

The integration of AI will inevitably create new roles. First will be clinical AI engineers who “develop and deploy AI solutions ... to improve patient care,” noted Bitesize Career, an educational career resource platform, in its 2026 survey. Next will be “medical device engineers, who come up with new technology [with the help of AI] to practically help patients by diagnosing, monitoring or treating them.”

Also expected to be in high demand are “medical imaging specialists, qualitative health researchers, health data scientists, healthcare software developers, and professors or lecturers in AI and health,” the survey noted.

Finance and accounting

Finance, accounting, and other regulated, math-based jobs are ideal for AI. Farseer, a developer of financial forecasting software, explained, “AI won’t take over the finance function, but it will change who stays relevant. [AI] isn’t about losing jobs. It’s about losing tasks.”

The jobs that will disappear “involve manual reporting, reconciliations, or variance analysis,” Farseer stressed. “Someone with better tools is already moving faster than you.” That is because AI “will solve problems better, spot risks sooner, and deliver more value to the business.”

Examples of such roles include “entry-level and transaction-based, [such as] bookkeepers ... junior accountants, [and] data entry and reporting support,” Farseer noted.

Meanwhile, “demand is growing for finance professionals who can work with AI, ask better questions, and explain the story behind the numbers, [including] reviewing results, validating assumptions, and making recommendations," the paper said. These tasks will create new roles within finance departments, including AI financial compliance auditors, algorithmic financial risk managers, and financial machine learning operations engineers.

In the short term, "AI can't fully replace finance jobs," said Farseer. "It can't apply judgment in unclear or unfamiliar situations; it struggles with unstructured data and open-ended business questions; it doesn't understand ethics, relationships, or reputational risk; it can generate wrong or misleading results, especially with GenAI."

An example of a typical AI error is it "might flag something as a risk that's perfectly normal or miss something critical because the pattern looks 'safe,' [as it can] misclassify transactions or overlook context," Farseer noted.

Tech and services

Involving humans from the early stages of AI development through continual oversight is crucial "to ensure accuracy, safety, accountability or ethical decision-making," according to an IBM note. "Machine learning has made astonishing strides in recent years, but even the most advanced deep learning models can struggle with ambiguity, bias or edge cases that deviate from their training data. Human feedback can help both improve models and serve as a safeguard when AI systems perform at insufficient levels."

IBM calls that hybrid model human-in-the-loop (HITL). It "allows AI systems to achieve the efficiency of automation without sacrificing the precision, nuance and ethical reasoning of human oversight."

WorkOS, a software developer, noted AI systems still suffer from "hallucinations [where] models can generate confident but incorrect or entirely fabricated information" and AI algorithms also can become biased if training data lacks diverse, comprehensive real-world data. In addition, AI systems "operating over long sessions or workflows can gradually drift from the user's original intent." Lastly, "ethical, legal, and safety concerns" arise when AI systems are unsupervised by humans, as they often violate national or corporate data privacy laws.

Invariably, integrating humans within the AI system itself is spawning new roles, said Hirint, a hiring and HR digital platform. The list includes prompt engineers who converse with AI to generate desired results; data analysts who ensure no bias in AI training data; robotics engineers, primarily in factories that rely on AI; and AI trainers, legal experts and business development managers.

Industry, logistics, supply chains

AI is already being integrated into the production and movement of goods. In January, Bloomberg reported industry-grade AI use, particularly in supply chains and logistics, boomed to tackle global logistics bottlenecks after COVID-19 lockdowns.

Another reason AI is widely favored is it reduces transportation costs. "The cost of goods moved is sometimes 30% or 40% of the cost of operation. [This] is prohibitive [when] scaling," Lior Ron, COO at Waabi, a developer of AI self-driving vehicles, told Bloomberg TV in January.

Another advantage is AI systems can "speak" to each other, ensuring products move from factories to markets with maximum efficiency. "If you reduce the friction in the system on manufacturing, distribution, and moving those goods around, you have unlocked … new economic opportunities," said Ron. The result: greater manufacturing strength, predictability, and resilience.

This transformation requires humans to oversee "the orchestration layer, where transverse [AI systems] coordinate decision-making and execution across functions," said Paco Ribagnac of Capgemini Invent, the global digital innovation, consulting, and transformation brand of the Capgemini Group.

Human supervision will also be essential in "The semantic layer where agents access the enterprise context they need to reason and act in alignment with how the organization actually operates," Ribagnac noted.

Other hires will supervise "The control panel where humans govern autonomy through guardrails and policies," as well as "The interaction layer where humans engage with AI agents to oversee, steer, and refine their recommendations."

On the back foot?

Low- and middle-income countries have yet to develop HITL AI models. "In most developing countries … the human layer; the expertise, accountability and institutional capacity that allow AI to be deployed in ways that work and can be trusted … barely exists," a WEF paper said. "Its absence is both the central obstacle to AI diffusion and the most significant job-creation opportunity of the next decade."

That puts the Egyptian government under increased pressure to invest in developing HITL AI models across industries or risk an increasing brain drain in coming years. "AI does not wait for national strategies or dedicated legislation to be in place," said the WEF paper. "It enters countries through software updates, digital transformation initiatives, vendor platforms, cloud services, procurement decisions, and existing institutional workflows."

IF YOU CAN'T BEAT IT, ACCEPT IT

Brain drain is hard to reverse, especially for low- and middle-income nations that rely on remittances. The key is to embrace brain drain and not rush to reverse it.

The harsh reality in low- and middle-income nations is that their top minds and talent often realize that working in wealthy nations can lead to higher living standards, better amenities and public infrastructure, and resources to build more fulfilling careers.

Bringing them back or retaining them is difficult. "Reversing brain drain is more than a policy challenge," noted a January 2025 paper from Beyond Emerging Europe, a digital platform promoting talent development. "It is a broader project of national renewal, requiring trust in domestic institutions and belief in a shared future."

For low- and middle-income nations, brain drain means more remittances. Remittances were Egypt's largest source of foreign currency inflows in fiscal year 2025/2026, accounting for nearly a third of the country's total.

A win-win solution would be for the government to overhaul school and university education systems. As a result, top local talent might secure more lucrative jobs, sending more money home. In the long run, it could prompt youth to consider staying in Egypt.

Much-needed change

A June 2025 paper from the World Economic Forum (WEF) said the primary challenge facing education is that "teachers are often disconnected from today's labor market, let alone tomorrow's." School and, to a lesser extent, university curricula are outdated. "In a world shaped by rapid technological change … we're preparing students to compete in a system designed for another century," the paper said.

The gap is most evident in secondary education. Its "metrics often reward memorization, individual performance, and technical accuracy," which the WEF noted are "skills that are increasingly being automated by AI."

Overhauling Gen Alpha's technical skill sets is essential. "By 2028 … nearly 23% of jobs will change … with 69 million roles created and 44% of workers' core skills expected to change," said the WEF. "[This is] one of the deepest misalignments in education today: We're preparing students for a future we can't predict, using frameworks built for a world we've already left behind."

AI elephant

Since ChatGPT launched, it was inevitable AI would be integrated into primary, secondary, and higher education. A September UNESCO paper said the technology's impact is similar to "writing transforming memory into text … 5,000 years ago" and "Gutenberg's printing press democratizing knowledge … 600 years ago. For the first time in history, technology is not silent. It speaks back."

For formal education ecosystems to cope, the UNESCO paper said the first step is to revisit the classroom setup. Instead of "a teacher in front of a chalkboard, students sitting in rows, reading from textbooks," education systems need to adjust to "a new actor [AI] that never sleeps, never breathes, never stops ingesting information."

That raises existential questions. "Do we still need classrooms, teachers, textbooks? … What does it mean to be a student?" said the UNESCO paper. "That is the magnitude of the disruption before us."

Answering these questions requires revisiting several education fundamentals. "First, AI as tutor," the paper said. "Chat-based assistants and adaptive platforms now provide explanations, practice, and feedback, often in local languages and even through low-bandwidth channels."

To maximize AI's benefits, educators, government officials, and other stakeholders need to work with AI companies to develop tools that "encourage reasoning [to] improve [student learning] outcomes," the paper said. "When [AI] simply hands out answers, students may learn less, not more. The difference lies in how the technology is used and supported."

The second education fundamental that needs revisiting is "AI as co-professor." This shift is already happening. A September UNESCO survey of university chairs found that "nine in ten respondents use AI in their professional work, [saying it] frees time for higher-level teaching." That is despite "many expressing uncertainty about its pedagogical value and its implications for integrity."

The third education fundamental that needs changing emerges from "AI as companion," UNESCO noted. "Surveys in high-income countries suggest that a majority of teenagers have already experimented with AI companions, [using] them regularly for serious conversations … That raises concerns about privacy, dependency, and the substitution of human relationships."

Developing countries, including Egypt, will inevitably encounter the "AI as companion" trend. Already having an education ecosystem equipped to address this shift would help mitigate its societal risks.

'Learning Compass'

Transforming a country's education ecosystem isn't limited to developing technical skills to cope with emerging technologies. It also needs to address psychological and societal changes.

The OECD, a group of rich nations, published the "OECD Learning Compass 2030" as "an evolving learning framework that sets out an aspirational vision for the future of education."

Learning Compass 2030's directional "competencies": knowledge (north), values (east), skills (south), and attitudes (west). These "guide students to well-being," the OECD said.

Its "degree markings" are called "core foundations." The first is "literacy and numeracy" between the knowledge and attitudes competencies. "Data and digital literacy" lies between knowledge and values. "Physical and mental health" is between values and skills. Lastly, "social and emotional foundations" lies between the skills and attitudes competencies.

The traditional compass rose (outer circle) is called "transformative competencies" in Learning Compass 2030. It comprises "creating new value," "reconciling tensions and dilemmas," and "taking responsibility for actions."

These competencies evolve as students act, reflect on their decisions, and anticipate what comes next. These actions represent the movable bezel of a physical compass.

Lastly, the compass needle represents "student agency" moving under the influence of "co-agency with peers, parents [and] communities."

'Teaching Compass'

Students are not the only ones needing direction. "Teaching Compass 2030" has the "anchor" at its center. The needle attached to it moves based on three drivers: "'being' [is] staying true to your purpose [strengthened by] increased self-awareness, 'becoming' is always growing and learning originating from self-reflection [and] 'belonging' is knowing your part in the greater community thanks to self-care," the OECD paper explained.

The Teaching Compass 2030 needle traverses the "learning ecosystem boat." One-third is "teacher agency," the OECD said. "It is more than autonomy; it is the belief that teachers can positively impact students and systems." It comprises "individual agency, co-agency, [and] collective agency." It comes from "continuous professional learning."

The second third is "teacher competencies," essential for "leading learning today," the OECD said. It includes "knowledge of their field, themselves, and students; skills to communicate, adapt, and lead; [and] attitudes and values that guide human ethical teaching." It emerges from "self-directed learning."

The last third of the Teaching Compass 2030 is "teaching well-being, which supports [the other two]," noted the OECD. It comprises "physical, socio-emotional [and] cognitive well-being." It is affected by "anticipation, action [and] reflection."

Change mindset

UNESCO's report noted that successfully developing an education ecosystem requires "moving beyond binary thinking." "The truth lies somewhere in between. [As with] most big [technological and social] disruptions, the impact ... on education will be complex, contradictory, and unfolding all at once."

The OECD paper stressed "learning from the past," explaining, "History is not only a chronology but a reservoir of tested ideas and cautionary tales ... Foresight that is untethered from lived reality quickly dissolves into speculation."

However, education reformers mustn't overlook the present. "The most powerful future thinking [requires] listening to authentic inner voices as well as community voices, noticing subtle signals of social or ecological change, and acknowledging emotions that surface in the face of uncertainty," OECD noted.

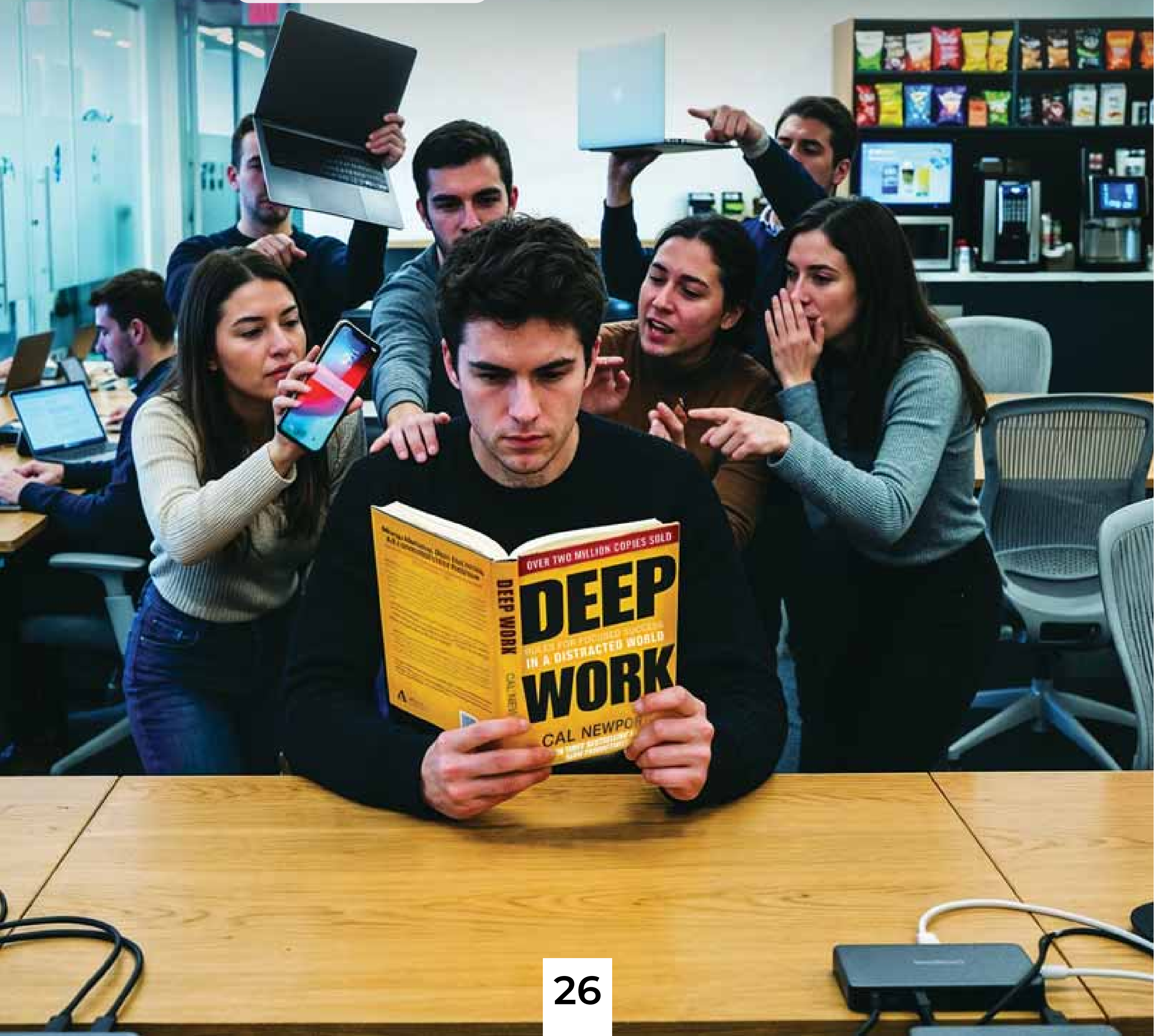
Ultimately, successfully developing an education ecosystem means Gen Alpha would "learn to pause, reflect and act with intention rather than merely sprinting toward the next credential or trend," said OECD. "A person anchored in the present can discern genuine opportunity and can imagine futures that honor the constraints and possibilities unfolding around them." ■

ROAD TO PRODUCTIVITY

Cal Newport's book "Deep Work: Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World" is an essential read as distractions grow more pervasive and powerful.

SCAN THE CODE TO PURCHASE

Summarized by **Tamer Hafez**



In today's world, allocating several hours, let alone days, to focus on a single difficult, critical task is increasingly challenging. Instant notifications from digital apps and social media fight a ferocious war for users' attention. Meanwhile, bosses are demanding immediate responses to their communications.

That reality promotes "shallow work" over "deep work." In his book "Deep Work: Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World," Cal Newport defines the latter as "professional activities performed in a state of distraction-free concentration that push your cognitive capabilities to their limit. These efforts create new value, improve your skill, and are hard to replicate."

"Shallow work" consists of "noncognitively demanding, logistical-style tasks, often performed while distracted. These efforts tend not to create much new value in the world and are easy to replicate."

The change from deep to shallow work comes at a time when "deep work is more valuable than ever before in our shifting economy," says Newport. "You would expect to see this skill promoted not just by ambitious individuals, but also by organizations hoping to get the most out of their employees. This is not happening [as] many other ideas are being prioritized as more important than deep work in the business world. Many of these trends actively decrease one's ability to go deep."

The book details mindsets that prioritize deep work, how to build willpower to tune out shallow work, and choose the most suitable deep work strategies to remain focused without being cut off from the outside world.

The mindset

Embracing deep work is essential to remain relevant in today's digital workplace. "As intelligent machines improve, and the gap between machine and human abilities shrinks, employers are becoming increasingly likely to hire 'new machines' instead of 'new people,'" the book says.

This transformation is "not driving down all jobs but is instead dividing them," Newport notes. "Though an increasing number of people will lose in this new economy as their skills become automatable or easily outsourced, there are others who [are] becoming more valued (and therefore more rewarded) than before."

Employees have to offer more value or a different value proposition than the machines poised to replace them.

The book highlights three mindsets that can thrive. First are "high-skilled workers [who] "use technology to augment their own performance" by feeding large databases, siphoning it and then using their own intelligence to make predictions. They realize "intelligent machines are not an obstacle to … success, but instead provide its precondition."

The second category is "the superstars." Their deep work surpasses today's technology, and they have the foresight to anticipate the next big trend. "This … holds for the growing number of fields where technology makes productive remote work possible, [such as] consulting, marketing, writing, design, and so on," the book says. "Once the talent market is made universally accessible, those at the peak of the market thrive while the rest suffer."

The third category driving deep work is "the owners." They have the capital and willingness to invest in new technologies developed by deep-work employees. "A venture capitalist in today's economy can fund a company like Instagram, which was eventually sold for a billion dollars, while employing only 13 people," Newport says.

Deep-work individuals master "two core abilities," the book says. "The ability to quickly master hard things [and] the ability to produce at an elite level, in terms of both quality and speed."

One way Newport highlights to increase capacity for deep work is "memorizing a deck of cards." This approach helps "subjects' ability to maintain their focus on essential information [as well as] improve [one's] general ability to concentrate."

Step one

Encouraging "deep work" over "shallow work" starts with the design and layout of the office space. "We … find ourselves in distracting open offices where inboxes cannot be neglected, and meetings are incessant. [This is] a setting where colleagues would rather you respond quickly to their latest email than produce the best possible results."

Until employees can work in closed offices with no distractions, the book details several strategies to facilitate deep work.

These strategies require "moving beyond good intentions and adding routines and rituals to your working life designed to minimize the amount of your limited willpower necessary to transition into and maintain a state of unbroken concentration." It also requires each person to "decide on [an ideal] depth philosophy," the book says.

Time philosophy

One technique "prioritizes deep work by trying to eliminate or minimize other types of work." Another is "a rhythmic strategy in which [a person] works [deeply] for the same hours every weekday morning, without exception, before beginning a workday punctuated by standard distractions."

"Both approaches work," stresses Newport, "but not universally." Shutting out shallow work "might make sense for someone whose primary professional obligation is to think big thoughts." However, if the job requires interacting with the outside world, "rejection of all things shallow" could cost employees their jobs."

Newport also says rigorously eliminating shallow work could isolate practitioners, hindering the exchange of ideas and expertise with coworkers. Instead, he recommends alternating between deep and shallow work, calling it a "bimodal philosophy of deep work."

"The decision between rhythmic [working more hours] and bimodal [philosophies] comes down to your self-control in such scheduling matters," he says.

In today's world, adopting a rhythmic philosophy "is one of the most common [strategies] among deep workers in standard office jobs. For many … it's not just self-control issues that bias them toward the rhythmic philosophy, but also the reality that some jobs don't allow you to disappear for days at a time when the need to go deep arises. For a lot of bosses, the standard is that you're free to focus as hard as you want … so long as the boss's emails are still answered promptly."

Fit-it-in philosophy

Another deep work option is "the journalistic philosophy of deep work scheduling." This approach sees individuals use any free time to switch to deep work. "This approach is not for [a] novice," Newport says. "Rapidly switching your mind from shallow to deep [work] doesn't come naturally. Without practice, such switches can seriously deplete your finite willpower reserves."

This philosophy "also requires a sense of confidence in [one's] abilities; a conviction that what you're doing is important and will succeed. This type of conviction is typically built on a foundation of existing professional accomplishment."

Another philosophy is to "ritualize" deep work by rigorously planning every hour of the day with hard deadlines, thereby cutting out potential "shallow work" opportunities. This "ritualization" includes how one "stacks … notebooks, what he puts on his wall, even what he wears to the office," notes Newport. "Everything is specified by a routine that has varied little over a long time." In essence, a person "trains himself to be organized."

Nevertheless, sometimes, fitting deep work into a daily routine isn't possible. The solution: "Make grand gestures." Newport explains, "By leveraging a radical change to your normal environment, coupled perhaps with a significant investment of effort or money, all dedicated toward supporting a deep work task, you increase the perceived importance of the task. This boost in importance reduces your mind's instinct to procrastinate and delivers an injection of motivation and energy."

Its downside is that these positive effects fade whenever the individual resorts to a "grand gesture."

Reassessment philosophy

The book says "not working alone" can be a deep work philosophy. "Properly leveraging collaboration can increase the quality of deep work in your professional life. [However] … the relationship between deep work and collaboration is tricky."

This dilemma likely arises when the company's workspace is designed to enable employees to easily exchange ideas and solutions, collaborate on projects, and stay attuned to the company's vision and mission. The philosophy behind enabling deep work in such an environment is called "The theory of serendipitous creativity." According to the book, it is most evident in mega tech companies like Meta.

Building such an environment, the office space design needs a "combination of soundproofed offices connected to large common areas, yielding a hub-and-spoke architecture of innovation in which both serendipitous encounter and isolated deep thinking are supported," the book said.

To determine whether "serendipitous creativity" is working properly, the book stressed the importance of adopting the philosophy of "executing like a business." That requires "focusing on the ... important [issues], acting on ... lagging measures and leading measures ... keeping a compelling scoreboard [and] creating a cadence of accountability."

Off-button philosophy

Newport believes "deep work" is easier if one is "lazy" between deep-work stints. "This strategy argues that you should ... inject regular and substantial freedom from professional concerns into your day, providing you with the idleness paradoxically required to get deep work done. [Such] downtime aids insights ... helps recharge the energy needed to work deep [and] the work that evening downtime replaces is usually not that important."

However, the book details the conditions that can ensure such "downtime" yields the desired results. "Don't take breaks from distractions [or when performing shallow work]. Instead, take breaks from focus."

To avoid unnecessary breaks, the book stresses mapping out deep work stints and predetermining the amount of downtime between them.

Cutting out distractions

The book concludes by highlighting the most obvious deep-work strategy: "Quit social media," whether it's for interpersonal connections like Facebook and Instagram or for curated information like Business Insider and BuzzFeed.

Implementing that decision is hard, especially for younger people. To wean themselves off these distraction-filled portals, users need to impose upon themselves a "much more stringent ... threshold for allowing a site regular access to your time and attention, and that most people should therefore be using many fewer such tools," the book says.

Newport recommends "not using the internet to entertain yourself." Instead, he advises engaging in real-world physical activities with real people. "When it comes to your relaxation, don't default to whatever catches your attention at the moment, but instead dedicate some advance thinking to the question of how you want to spend your 'day within a day.'"

Lastly, "drain" shallow tasks and work by "scheduling every minute of your day ... quantify the depth of every activity, ask your boss for a shallow work [time] budget [aka, percentage of time spent on shallow work] ... finish your [shallow] work [at] the same time every day, [and] become hard to reach."

Committing to one or more of these philosophies is essential, Newport contends. "The ability to perform deep work is becoming increasingly rare at exactly the same time it is becoming increasingly valuable in our economy. As a consequence, the few who cultivate this skill and then make it the core of their working life will thrive." ■

Market Watch

Stock Analysis

Cautious optimism amid uncertainty

From May 15 to June 15, 2026, Egyptian equities traded in a more cautious environment as escalating regional geopolitical tensions weighed on investor sentiment. This backdrop helped the EGX70 (up 2.4% to 15,447) outperform the EGX30 (down 1.6% to 52,307) for a second consecutive month. Declines outnumbered advances by a 3-to-2 ratio. Still, Egyptian stocks showed resilience, with selective interest in small- and mid-caps offsetting weakness in commodity-linked large caps. Stock-specific catalysts remained the primary driver of performance, while trading increasingly favored companies with corporate actions and restructuring stories.

Several investment companies stood out among the gainers. Tycoon Holding (TYCN, up 96%), formerly Alexandria National Company for Financial Investment (ANFI), nearly doubled during the period, fueled mainly by speculative retail activity. Aspire Capital Holding (ASPI, up 22%) rose after completing an EGP380 million capital increase, primarily to repay outstanding dues (37% of proceeds) and to fund its brokerage (26%), microfinance (20%), and asset management (17%) businesses. B Investments Holding (BINV, up 13%) advanced on news of a potential IPO for Egypt's leading pharmacy group, El-Ezaby Pharmacy. Tawasoa Factoring (TWSA, up 15%) extended its post-IPO rally.

Real estate stocks remained among investors' preferred sectors. El-Shams Housing & Development (ELSH, up 55%) was a standout as the market re-rated the stock following a revaluation of its real estate portfolio. GPI for Urban Growth (GPIM, up 32%) resumed its rally, extending its year-to-date gain to 68%. Bonyan (BONY, up 16%) continued to attract interest, particularly after announcing plans for a 10% stock dividend. The company reported it used 72.5% of its recent EGP250 million capital increase to pay installments due on two real estate assets.

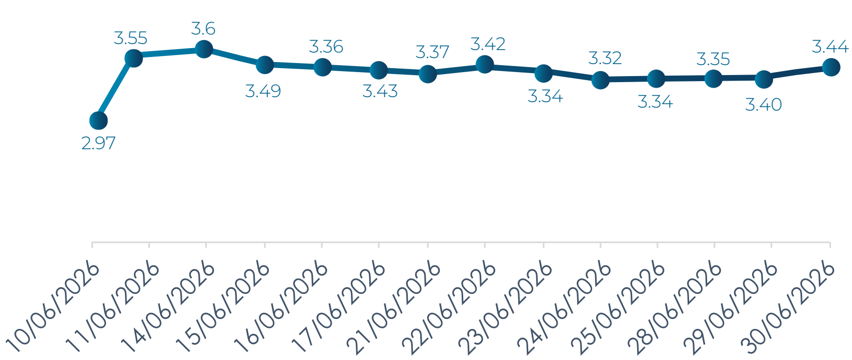
Healthcare and industrial stocks also delivered positive returns. Future Care for Medical Industries (FCMD, up 33%) rallied, while ASEC Mining (ASCM, up 22%) advanced.

On the downside, commodity exporters came under pressure. Egypt Aluminum (EGAL, down 10%) retreated as global aluminum prices corrected from recent highs, while fertilizer producers Abu Qir Fertilizers (ABUK, down 15%) and MOPCO (MFPC, down 16%) declined following weaker global urea prices after sharp rallies in previous months.

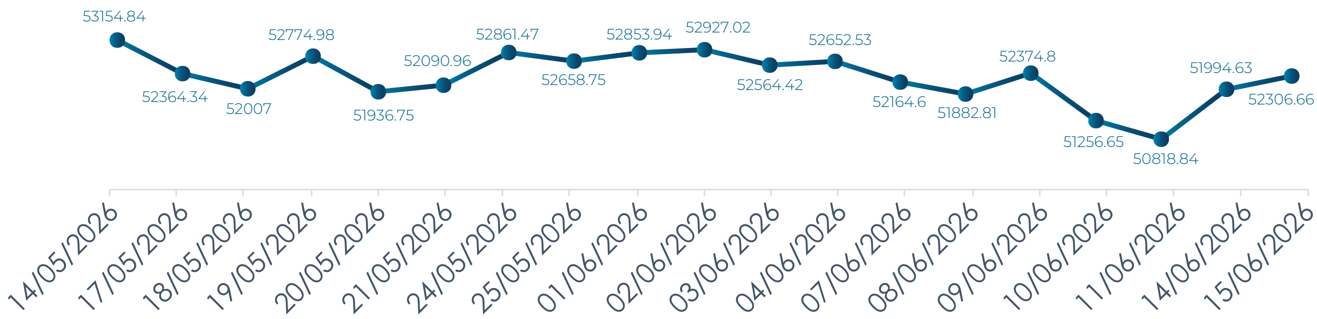
On a macro level, sentiment was supported by expectations that the Central Bank of Egypt (CBE) would pause its monetary easing until the outlook improves. The outbreak of the US-Iran conflict heightened global risk aversion and commodity price volatility, reinforcing a selective approach to Egyptian equities.

Korra Energi (KORA)

Korra Energi (KORA) debuted at EGP 2.97 per share. The offering drew strong investor interest, highlighting demand for energy and infrastructure companies. Shares traded robustly after listing, buoyed by expectations KORA will benefit from Egypt's infrastructure and renewable energy investments. On its first trading day, June 11, the stock jumped 20% and reached an intraday high of EGP3.87; 30% above its IPO price. By June 30, KORA closed at EGP 3.44, up approximately 16% from its IPO price, with average daily turnover of around EGP500 million.



EGX 30



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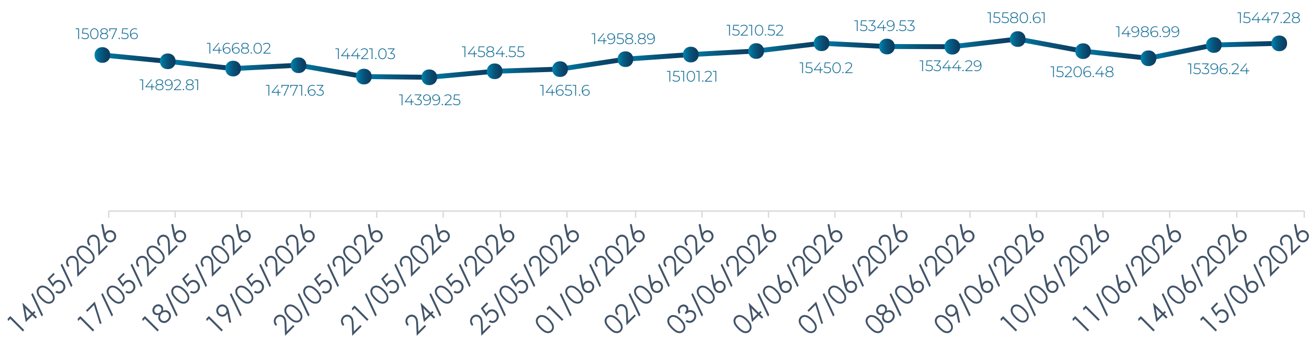

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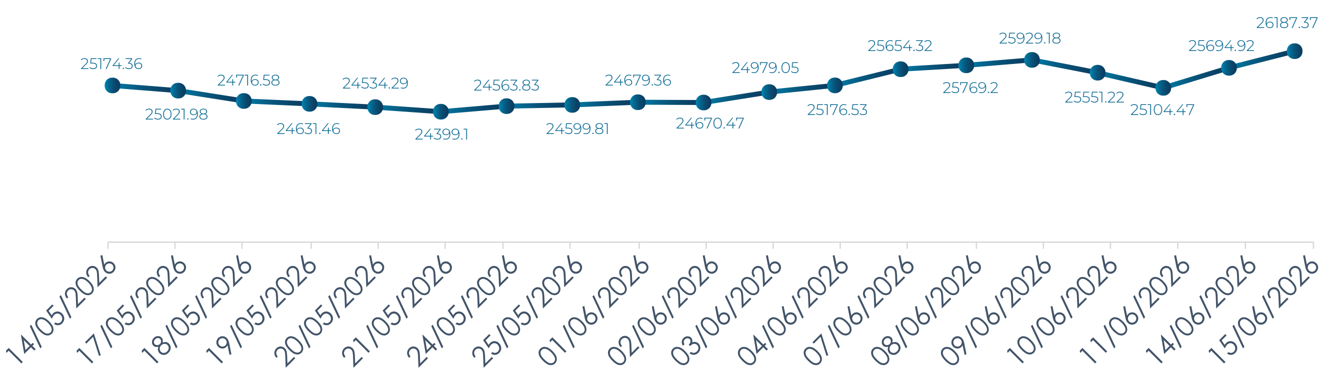

Tamayuz index is an all-new weighted index, launched on June 23rd. It comprises companies with high free cash flows from operations. EGX stresses that this is not an endorsement of those stocks.

TRAVEL TRANSITION UNDERWAY

Amid regional instability, destinations in North Africa led by Egypt and Morocco gain momentum.

by **Fatma Fouad**

Tourism to the Middle East has been significantly affected by ongoing tensions in the Persian Gulf region. According to Reuters in March, Middle East tourism, valued at $367 billion annually to the region, "is taking a hit from the widening conflict between U.S.-Israel forces and Iran, putting at risk the region's carefully constructed image as a safe and high-end vacation hotspot."

It is contributing to a diversion of travelers toward North African destinations … lifting its hospitality industry," according to a May article in Arabian Gulf Business.

A report by U.N. Tourism published in June shows a drop in the expected annual growth in international arrivals to the Middle East in 2026 to between 2% and 3%, depending on the duration and scope of the war, compared with the 3%–4% initially forecast. In addition to flight disruptions, the report cited "the sudden rise in oil prices and shortage of jet fuel in some markets is leading to higher fares and reduced air capacity in other regions."

Among North African nations, Egypt recorded the strongest growth across flights, hotel occupancy and excursions in the first quarter of 2026 on Wego, a travel search engine, according to Enterprise. Inbound tourism to Egypt increased 15.6% compared to the same period last year, government data showed.

Booking shift

With the Middle East accounting for 5% of international arrivals globally and 14% of international transit traffic, losses resulting from the war are substantial. Last month, the London-based World Travel and Tourism Council said the Middle East's tourism sector was incurring at least $600 million per day in losses from international visitor spending due to the conflict.

According to forecasts from the analytics and advisory company Oxford Economics, arrivals in the Middle East could fall by 11% to 27% in 2026, wiping out $34 billion to $56 billion in visitor spending.

The GCC is the most affected region. According to Jasem Albudaiwi, GCC's Secretary General in April, "Tourism revenue losses in the GCC arising from the US-Israeli war with Iran are estimated between $13 billion and $32 billion." The revenue drop will be driven by tourist inflows falling by between 8 and 19 million tourists.

GCC countries used to enjoy high tourist inflows, establishing themselves as global destinations and diversifying their economies. In 2024, GCC countries received more than 72 million tourists, generating revenue of nearly $120 billion, according to data from the Gulf Statistical Centre.

To restore such records, Albudaiwi emphasized that GCC countries should move from traditional coordination to a higher level of practical integration and proactive response, given that the tourism sector is a fundamental pillar for achieving economic sustainability.

Egypt as regional anchor

Rather than destroy Middle East travel demand, the war has reshuffled it. "We saw demand shift toward Egypt and Morocco, almost immediately," Mamoun Hmidan, Wego's chief business officer, told EnterpriseAM. "Many travelers who had planned to visit elsewhere in the region were redirected." Wego's main customer base is in Southeast Asia, India, the Middle East and Egypt.

The shift in demand was clearly visible in Egypt on Wego's platform. "That translated into nearly 30% growth on Wego," said Hamidan. "Egypt posted the strongest growth across every category we track. Morocco ranked second, but Egypt remained comfortably ahead."

Accordingly, Egypt is emerging as a chief beneficiary of the redistribution of travel demand within the Middle East. While tourist arrivals in the Middle East fell 14% in the first quarter of 2026, Egypt posted a 16% increase, according to the U.N. Tourism report.

In May, government figures showed arrivals rose 7% to 6.1 million in the first four months of the year, up from 5.7 million during the same period of 2025. Egypt also expects to attract as many as 20 million tourists this year, which would set a new record, according to Bloomberg.

As planned, the country is targeting 30 million tourists annually by 2030, according to the State Information Service. The surge in visitors in recent years reflected "the growing availability of cheap flights from Europe, as budget airlines and tour operators catered to holidaymakers attracted by Egypt's year-round sunny climate," said an April article in African Business magazine.

Gulf travelers played a crucial role in demand for Egypt, as many residents sought a respite from the war. According to Wego, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait became Egypt's largest source markets.

Cairo and the Mediterranean coast saw a surge of Gulf visitors during the Eid Al Adha holiday. With record-high airfares, Egypt stood out as an appealing option, as Gulf travelers favored shorter trips over long-distance travel, which carried higher costs and greater uncertainty, Enterprise noted.

The U.N. report cited a range of attractions that draw visitors to Egypt. These include the Grand Egyptian Museum, which opened in November; the Giza Pyramids; Nile cruises between Luxor and Aswan; Alexandria's Mediterranean coastline; and Red Sea diving destinations.

Even when interest rose beyond expectations, businesses were largely able to absorb the increase without significant disruption. "Hotels in Egypt typically operate at about 70% to 75% occupancy year-round. Even when that exceeded 90%, it remained manageable – there was sufficient capacity," said Hmidan.

North Coast and Red Sea destinations are set to build strong momentum this summer. According to a June article by Ahram Online, industry leaders expect Egypt – especially the North Coast and Red Sea – to attract growing numbers of Arab tourists seeking stable destinations, further reinforcing the summer season's expanding role in supporting national economic growth.

Morocco in the spotlight

Morocco has become one of the top beneficiaries of the broader shift toward experiential and diversified leisure travel as the African continent's top tourist draw for a second consecutive year in 2025, recording almost 20 million visitors and generating about $14.8 billion in revenue, according to a June article by Hospitality Investors, a tourism and hospitality news platform.

Between January and the end of May, Morocco received 7.7 million tourists, a 7% year-on-year increase, according to figures released by the country's Ministry of Tourism, Handicrafts, and Social and Solidarity Economy.

Data published in April by Lagos-based advisory firm W Hospitality Group, Africa's hotel development pipeline has reached a record 123,846 rooms across 675 hotels, up 19% year-on-year. Egypt and Morocco alone account for more than 45% of all rooms under development on the continent, with a 27% year-on-year increase.

Preparations for the 2030 FIFA World Cup, which Morocco will co-host with Spain and Portugal, are enhancing the country's attractiveness. "Infrastructure and hospitality investment are accelerating, with the country counting on a $4 billion investment drive to increase hotel capacity by a fifth before the tournament," according to Bloomberg in March.

Morocco aims to add 25,000 hotel rooms, representing "one of the most significant expansions ever undertaken in the kingdom, both in terms of its scale and its pace," according to Imad Barrakad, head of the Moroccan tourism development agency SMIT.

Notably, around three-quarters of the 700 planned projects are to be funded by Moroccan investors. International brands are expected to manage at least 15% of the new capacity, he added.

Short-term challenge

While ongoing tensions in the Middle East region impact the tourism sector, the flexibility of North Africa's destinations remains the biggest competitive advantage. "You might feel some pressure at airports, passport control or ground transportation. But those are operational issues. The infrastructure is there, the workforce is there, and operators know how to respond quickly. The more demand the region sees, the faster the sector adjusts," Hmidan told Enterprise. "Tourism here is far more flexible than many people assume."

It is notable that the "immediate impact [of the war in Iran] is more visible in booking behavior, air connectivity concerns, insurance and risk perception and in softer pricing in some leisure segments," said Nandini Roy Choudhury, senior analyst at Future Market Insights, in May.

She added that despite persisting concerns, hoteliers do not expect the conflict to have a tangible impact on their North African operations. "The [Iran] conflict is now creating a short-term confidence shock rather than fundamentally changing the long-term hospitality story," Choudhury said.

Abdellah Essonni, regional vice president for North Africa at hotel management firm Aleph Hospitality, said hotel industry growth in the region will be secured by infrastructure development driven in part by preparations for the 2030 FIFA World Cup.

"Projects already under construction or backed by strong developers are likely to continue, particularly in strategic tourism zones," said Choudhury. "However, investors may delay final investment decisions, financing closures, land commitments or brand signings for projects that are still at an early stage."

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EGYPT'S EVOLVING MARKETING LANDSCAPE: AI, DIGITAL INNOVATION, AND NATION BRANDING

On June 15, AmCham Egypt held its annual marketing conference, spotlighting the nation's tourism strengths. Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Sherif Fathy emphasized Egypt's unmatched diversity, saying, "Egypt is strong because of diversified touristic products, locations, and activities that are not matched."

Fathy said Egypt's upgraded infrastructure, including roads and transport networks, is gaining recognition in international media, which is enhancing the visitor experience. Authenticity sets Egypt apart, he stressed.

To maintain momentum, Fathy stressed the need for greater capacity: more hotel rooms, better flight connectivity, and upgraded airports. He noted, they are investing in product development, with dedicated teams focused on enhancing both mature and emerging tourism offerings, working in partnership with the private sector.

Fathy introduced EGTAP, a comprehensive Learning Management System for tourism and antiquities, promoting online learning and professional development. The ministry partners with the Chamber of Hotel Establishments and international institutions like Glion to offer training and certifications, strengthening skills and talent across the sector.

Private sector engagement is a priority. The government aims to remove barriers, facilitate investment, and support growth. Once the market is competitive, the government's role shifts to oversight and compliance.

Digital transformation is accelerating. More archaeological sites are being automated, and new technologies, including augmented reality, are being deployed in museums and heritage sites.

Sustainability is integral.

Over 60% of hotels have adopted green practices, and 30% of diving centers now follow sustainable standards. By 2030, Egypt aims to provide renewable energy to all tourism facilities, aligning with international tour operator requirements.

Fathy also highlighted the importance of smart, cost-effective marketing that delivers results. While AI improves audience targeting, he noted, "travelers are ultimately motivated by experiences."

Egypt's strategy is to combine destinations and experiences in novel ways, such as pairing the North Coast with Siwa Oasis or designing itineraries that showcase both cultural and leisure attractions.

He noted tourism patterns are shifting. German tourists, who once mainly visited the Red Sea and Hurghada, are now combining destinations such as Hurghada and Luxor. Fathy cautioned that while AI-driven segmentation is powerful, over-reliance can stifle innovation and limit traveler choice: "We must guide market development, not just follow established patterns."

Fathy noted that Egypt is targeting 20 million tourist arrivals this year and has achieved 4% growth so far. Transportation connectivity is key. To that end, the government has lowered airline load factor incentives to 60% to ensure seat capacity and sustained connectivity. "We want customers to find an airline to fly to Egypt," Fathy said.

He explained that European travelers are not canceling, but shifting to closer, budget-friendly destinations. Egypt's resilience stands out: as a year-round destination, it sees peak demand in summer yet maintains high visitor satisfaction throughout the year.

Session I: Consumers at the forefront

In the conference's opening session, Ihab Gohar, CEO of Animation Advertising, charted marketing's evolution from print and TV to today's digital, AI-driven world. He noted the shift from reach and visibility to true engagement: "If you can engage, you truly exist."

Gohar stressed that data defines this era. "The key is how to read, find, and analyze data. Analytics is the keyword, and power lies in how well you understand and respond to data." Artificial intelligence, he added, is another major force. "Power will belong to brands that are intelligent, fast, and agile. Agility is now the name of the game."

Gohar argued that consumers—not technology or media—have disrupted traditional marketing. Their changing behaviors and expectations have accelerated digital transformation and forced brands to adapt. "We don't change marketing first, and then the consumer follows; we adjust in response."

Where traditional ads delivered one-way messages, today's consumers search, read widely, and are shaped by global standards. The brand-audience relationship has fundamentally changed. "Today, the consumer talks about the brand, rather than the brand talking about itself."

Consumers are now creators and influencers who shape brand perception. "Every person can be a good or bad ambassador, creating stories and buzz around brands." Gohar highlighted Egypt's opportunity to combine AI with creativity, culture, and heritage.

In this fast-changing environment, speed is critical. "If you are not moving fast enough, someone else will move faster, seize the opportunity, and achieve what you were aiming for."

AI, Gohar concluded, levels the playing field. Large companies once benefited from greater resources and scale. "Today, small businesses, startups, and young marketers have access to many of the same tools as major global brands. Scale is becoming less important than creativity, innovation, and the ability to use technology effectively."

Session II: Staying relevant

In the second season, Dina Dash, founder of DASH Management, stressed that although marketing tools and channels continue to evolve, the core challenge remains unchanged. "The main challenge has always been the same: how do we get people to care about our service, our business, or our product?" she said.

She stressed, building meaningful consumer connections is more important than ever, noting that while reach can be bought, trust and belief cannot. She added that the most significant transformation is the shift in power from brands to consumers.

Kareem Abou Gamrah, co-founder and CEO of Peace Cake, said successful content creation depends on understanding audience behavior rather than focusing on platforms. To remain relevant, he highlighted the importance of studying leading creators and analyzing audience-retention techniques and performance metrics.

Abou Gamrah also challenged the assumption that only short-form content succeeds online. While retention rates for brief videos are often low, he argued that longer formats can perform strongly when they provide genuine value. "Our videos typically range between 15 and 20 minutes, and sometimes even longer," he said.

Mohamed Siam, CCO at Juhayna Food Industries, said marketing has evolved from promoting products to communicating benefits and consumer value. He explained that brands must focus on how products fit consumers' needs and daily lives. With the rise of digital platforms, authenticity and storytelling have become essential to engagement, while each platform requires its own strategy, format, and storytelling approach.

Lastly, Ramez Moufid, culture marketing manager at Red Bull, highlighted the importance of community-driven communication in experiential marketing. "The first step in experiential marketing is identifying the right community and ensuring that communication comes from within that community, using its own language," he said. Moufid stressed that experiential marketing creates lasting memories rooted in emotions and personal experiences, generating deeper, more enduring impressions.

Session III: Tech x Creativity

Omar El Monayer, CEO of Sigma Fit and co-founder and CIO at Meska AI, emphasized the remarkable capabilities of the latest generation of AI models, noting that some now demonstrate reasoning and problem-solving skills once thought impossible.

However, El Monayer cautioned organizations against feeling compelled to adopt every emerging technology. “You do not need to use every frontier technology,” he said. “What matters is understanding what to use, where to use it, and what outcome you are trying to achieve.”

Abdel-Azim Osman, CMO and co-founder of Nawy, underscored AI’s transformative impact on operational efficiency, especially in marketing and advertising. “In the marketing department alone, we use more than 15 different AI tools to manage and optimize our advertising activities,” he explained, noting that campaigns that previously took days can now be launched within hours. He added that over 90% of certain operational tasks have been replaced or enhanced by AI, revolutionizing nearly every department.

Ahmed Imbabi, brand and communication director at e& Egypt, stressed the necessity of human oversight. He cautioned that some companies overestimate AI’s ability to function autonomously, while crucial areas such as brand trust, emotional connection, judgment, and strategic decision-making still require substantial human involvement. Imbabi advised that organizations should first assess whether an AI use case is measurable, valuable, and scalable before moving forward.

Bahy Aboelezz, co-founder and CEO of Kijamii, an advertising agency, said many corporate generative AI projects fail to deliver tangible results. He described his agency’s strategy of forming an AI task force that includes representatives from strategy, consumer insights, creative development, production, media planning and buying, and operations. Aboelezz stressed the significance of agentic AI, which automates and orchestrates workflows to empower teams.

Session VI: AI-powered tourism

During the final session of the Marketing Conference, Sahar El Zoghby, Group CEO of FP7/McCann, outlined how Egypt’s tourism marketing strategy has evolved to reflect changing traveler behavior, digital transformation, and AI-driven marketing.

She explained that modern travelers no longer search for a single “best” destination but instead seek experiences that match their personal interests. This shift has strengthened Egypt’s positioning around “Unmatched Diversity,” highlighting its appeal to cultural travelers, adventure seekers, divers, luxury tourists, and nature enthusiasts.

El Zoghby noted that tourism marketing has moved away from one-size-fits-all campaigns toward an always-on content strategy. Social media, creator partnerships, and seasonal activations now play a central role in showcasing Egypt’s tourism offerings. She emphasized that authentic influencer-generated content is increasingly replacing traditional celebrity endorsements as creators gain greater influence over travel decisions.

She also highlighted a shift from expensive international media placements to content distributed through Egyptian Tourism Authority-owned digital channels, enabling more targeted and cost-effective audience engagement.

On the technology side, El Zoghby said AI and data analytics are transforming tourism marketing through audience segmentation, behavioral analysis, automated optimization, and personalized content delivery. By combining first-party data with insights from travel platforms, marketers can target travelers more effectively throughout their decision-making journey.

Among the standout examples was a Google partnership that launched the MENA region’s first weather-triggered automated tourism campaign, serving customized YouTube ads to UK audiences based on local weather conditions.

El Zoghby concluded that the future of destination marketing lies in combining compelling content, authentic storytelling, influencer partnerships, and AI-powered media optimization to deliver personalized, relevant, and measurable experiences for travelers worldwide.

Monthly luncheon

On June 9, AmCham Egypt welcomed Minister of Trade and Industry Khaled Hashem, who outlined a sharper, execution-focused industrial strategy to bolster Egypt's competitiveness and regional leadership.

Hashem detailed a reform-driven roadmap that prioritizes practical outcomes over high-level planning to directly improve the investment climate. "It's not about big titles or slides," he emphasized. "It's about ensuring that what we say is reflected in the day-to-day life of investors."

Central to the strategy are doubling Egypt's non-oil exports to $100 billion by 2030, building a more self-sufficient industrial base, and achieving a positive trade balance. Hashem stressed the importance of private-sector input, noting, "This strategy is not based on what I think or on a global consultant. It's based on feedback from investors and producers to ensure our actions address real needs on the ground."

The plan identifies priority sectors – textiles, food processing, automotive, electronics, and pharmaceuticals – supported by key enabling industries such as energy, water treatment, and machinery. Additionally, localizing complementary industries whose goods are currently imported is a major target. "We are in a very competitive landscape now," Hashem said, underlining the need to strengthen local supply chains.

A significant focus is on developing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which Hashem describes as the missing piece of Egypt's industrial structure. "We don't have a strong base of SMEs and that affects the entire pyramid," he said. The ministry is exploring digital B2B platforms to connect manufacturers, aiming for an industry equivalent of 'Talabat.'

Human capital reform is also a priority. While Egypt produces a large number of graduates, Hashem identified a gap in quality. "We have the numbers, but we don't have the right quality," he said, describing a new training model designed to yield "world-class labor," even if in smaller cohorts.

Policy reforms are underway to ease investment barriers, including a new industrial land leasing model to reduce upfront costs. "Land should be an enabler, not a burden," he said.

9 June

Growth, competitiveness, and regional leadership

The ministry is introducing new financing tools, such as industrial investment vehicles to channel domestic savings into manufacturing. At the same time, digitalization efforts are targeting licensing and investor services, areas Hashem acknowledged remain challenging. "It's a painful journey today," he admitted.

To ensure execution, a dedicated follow-up unit will monitor implementation and report directly to the minister. "Only 20% to 30% of decisions reach proper implementation," he said, adding that the new unit will help close that gap.

Strategically, Hashem emphasized technology over geography, aiming to localize and integrate Egypt into global value chains for sustainable growth. "We are going to pivot to technology," he stated.

In conclusion, Hashem positioned himself as a direct bridge between government and business: "I was sitting in your place less than four months ago. You can consider me your extension with access."

Ethics Leadership

Ethics Committee: Guidelines for leading with integrity

At a time of rapid technological change, geopolitical shifts, climate challenges, and economic uncertainty, ethical leadership is no longer optional — it is essential. Disruptions such as digital transformation, artificial intelligence, global supply-chain fragility, and intensifying social expectations amplify both risks and responsibilities for organizations. Leaders today must navigate complex trade-offs because decisions reverberate quickly across employees and societies.

Given the significance, timeliness, and relevance of addressing ethical leadership and the importance of integrity at this time and age, the Board of Governors of the American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt decided to add, starting with the 2025/2026 cycle year, to its rich and diversified portfolio of committees, a new committee named "Ethical Leadership."

The committee, whose membership spans a wide range of expertise across businesses and industries, held a workshop on 5 May 2026 to discuss what ethical leadership means today. The objectives of the workshop were to frame the discussion with a set of guidelines and practical references–not a code of conduct or a compliance checklist–underscoring that, in an age of information abundance and accelerated change, ethical leadership anchors trust, sustains long-term value, and protects organizational legitimacy.

Ethical leadership is a practiced commitment to holding oneself to the same standards set for the organization — being accountable, transparent, and actively nurturing the well-being of employees and communities, not just the bottom line. In other words, it means aligning what we say with what we do, every day and at every level of the organization. Crucially, based on the workshop discussions, the guidelines framed ethics as a journey, not a checklist: compliance sets a floor, while ethics require judgment to do what is right, even when inconvenient. Small, repeated decisions under pressure — rather than dramatic rule-breaking — are often the source of ethical failure.

The discussion led to the identification of 6 guiding principles that emerged as core pillars of ethical leadership in practice. They were presented not as abstract ideals but as practical commitments.

1. Integrity as Practice

Integrity is not a label but a set of consistent values and actions that reflect honesty and moral principles—especially when doing so is difficult, costly, unseen, or inconvenient. Therefore, leaders must explicitly name the ethical question, treat compliance as a baseline, and choose actions consistent with their declared principles.

2. Accountability with Courage

Real accountability is not a system or a process; it is a human act: the willingness to admit mistakes and say "I was wrong" in public, to raise concerns even when it is uncomfortable, to apply checks and balances and standards consistently, and to hold a mirror up to the gap between an organization's values and its behavior. Courage is the ingredient that systems alone cannot provide. Accordingly, it is invaluable for leaders to ensure that any employee, starting with the most junior, feels safe speaking up and correcting errors publicly.

3. Transparency as Default

In an era of data abundance, selective openness is a form of dishonesty. Leaders should clearly explain decisions, trade-offs, and mistakes, present data to illuminate rather than obscure, and repeatedly communicate values so transparency becomes expected behavior. This commitment extends to how information is presented. Transparency should be the expectation, not the exception.

4. Societal Responsibility as Strategy

Ethical leadership extends beyond organizational boundaries. When an organization reduces its workforce while publicly championing employee well-being, the gap between words and actions erodes trust. The most ethically sophisticated organizations factor the human cost of decisions into their planning, not as an afterthought. The guidelines recommend humane approaches to restructuring, such as redeployment and transition support.

5. Ethics as Organizational DNA

Culture is defined by what organizations tolerate, reward, and ignore. Embedding ethics requires cascading values through every level, not merely articulating them at the top or applying them as a surface coating; applying standards consistently; rewarding ethical acts as visibly as financial results; and modeling leadership behavior under pressure.

6. Digital Ethics as Imperative

Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and data analytics do not create new ethical dilemmas so much as amplify existing ones at scale, speed, and impact. Human ethics should remain constant regardless of technological advancement. Leaders must understand technology and data systems well enough to identify risks, pair adoption with ethical oversight and continuous reassessment, and define ownership when automated systems cause harm. One should ask not only "can we do this?" but also "should we?" and design systems with human dignity and fairness at their core.

To help translate principles into decisions, the workshop recommended an "ethical pause" before consequential choices: ask whether the action is legal, fair, and right for the long term, and whether one could comfortably explain it publicly. This short set of questions turns abstract values into a decision-making habit that counters short-termism.

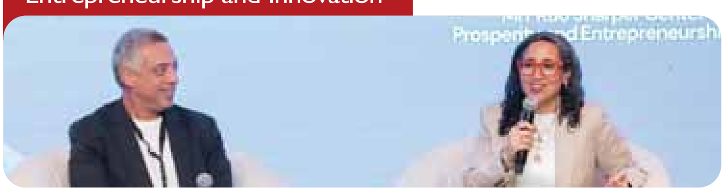
Individually, leaders should hold themselves to the standards they set, model vulnerability by admitting mistakes, consistently apply the ethical pause, and understand the values embedded in artificial intelligence and data systems. Organizationally, culture must be treated as a leadership responsibility — built deliberately, not delegated to human resources or people management; ethical behavior should be visibly rewarded; values must cascade meaningfully; and trusted channels for raising concerns must exist and be trusted.

The Ethical Leadership Workshop provided an initial, action-oriented blueprint for leading responsibly in turbulent, disruptive times. It defined ethical leadership in practice and outlined the principles, behaviors, and habits that several AmCham members and senior representatives across Egypt's private sector identified as central to effective leadership. The workshop served as a reminder that ethics is a continuous practice embedded in daily decisions, organizational incentives, and technological oversight. In a world where disruptions magnify both harm and opportunity, ethical leadership preserves trust, reduces risk, and aligns organizations with the long-term interests of their stakeholders and societies.

The workshop discussion centered on the distinction between compliance and ethics. Compliance is the floor, the minimum required by law, regulation, and policy. Ethics is the ceiling, the judgment to do what is right, even when it is inconvenient. The most common ethical failures rarely involve breaches of explicit rules; they stem from the accumulation of small decisions made under pressure, where compliance was met but integrity was not. The discussion highlighted that ethical leadership is not a static concept or a set of policies but a journey that must gradually become embedded in an organization's culture and DNA. Ethical behavior cannot be achieved through policies alone; values must be communicated and reinforced over time and become most visible in moments of pressure, uncertainty, or competing priorities.

The workshop was a starting point, not a conclusion. The Ethical Leadership Committee plans to continue the discussion through future sessions, expert engagement, and broader member participation to refine these principles over time. This is not the end of the discussion. It is the beginning of a more candid one.

Entrepreneurship and Innovation



16 June

IPO Policy, Regulation, and Market Readiness

On June 16, AmCham Egypt's Entrepreneurship and Innovation Committee, together with the MIT Kuo-Sharper Center, hosted a fireside chat with Walid Hassouna, Founder and CEO of valU. Hassouna shared valU's journey from its 2017 founding as an EFG initiative to its status as a leading Egyptian fintech and publicly listed company.

Drawing on 16 years in banking, Hassouna described how valU addressed a gap in consumer finance by offering instant credit approvals and data-driven underwriting, reducing financing decisions to minutes.

A highlight was valU's landmark IPO in June 2025, Egypt's first, which showcased the potential of Egypt's capital market and boosted investor confidence in fintech's growth prospects.

Hassouna emphasized the role of regulatory engagement in scaling fintech, detailing how valU evolved from working within existing rules to collaborating with regulators to shape supportive policies. FRA-led reforms, such as digital onboarding and e-signatures, have fueled growth in Egypt's consumer finance market.

Looking ahead, valU aims to issue credit cards and cash loans, expand into SME financing, seek a digital banking license, and grow regionally, with Iraq identified as a promising next step. Hassouna also addressed consumer debt concerns, noting Egypt's strict debt limits and interest-free BNPL offerings.

The discussion underscored how innovation, regulatory cooperation, and product development have powered valU's success and set an example for fintech growth in emerging markets. The event concluded with a networking reception for entrepreneurs and stakeholders.

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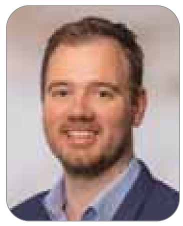

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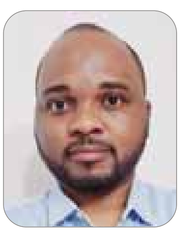

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Khaled Metwaly
Chief Business Officer, Intercom Enterprises.

Ahmed Nafea
Chief Growth & Marketing Officer, Jumia Egypt.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

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Chair Injaz Egypt, INJAZ Egypt.

Pharmaceuticals

Amira Ellakanni
Strategic Projects & Pricing Lead – AMET, Opella Healthcare

Veniece Nabil
Corporate Affairs Lead, Takeda Pharmaceuticals Egypt.

Real Estate

Sherine Badreldine
Head of Operations, Savills Egypt

Ahmed Noureldin
Chief Finance Officer, Tatweer Misr

REPLACEMENTS IN MEMBER COMPANIES

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Chief Operating Officer, ITWORX EDU EGYPT.

Category: Associate Resident
Sector: Information & Communication Technology

Mohamed ElAshry
Country HR Lead, Microsoft Egypt, LLC.

Category: Affiliate
Sector: Information & Communication Technology

Reem El Abd
Chief Human Resources Officer, AXA Egypt.

Category: Affiliate
Sector: Insurance

David Chi
CEO, Cheiron Energy.

Category: General
Sector: Petroleum

Moataz Metawee
Chief Executive Officer, onebank.

Category: Associate Resident
Sector: Financial Sector

Change in Member's Category

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Head of HR Jumia EG - Group Head of Talent Acquisition Jumia Group, Jumia Egypt.

Category: Affiliate
Sector: Information & Communication Technology

Hazem Abdelhady
Chief Human Resources Officer, Misr Insurance Holding Company.

Category: Affiliate
Sector: Insurance

Sherif Emara
Chief Financial Officer, Egypt & Levant, DP World Sokhna SAE.

Category: Affiliate
Sector: Transportation

A Glance At The Press

Al Masry Al Youm, June 27

Media Lite collates a selection of some the most entertaining offbeat and lighthearted news items published in the local press. All opinions and allegations belong solely to the original source publications and no attempt has been made to ascertain their veracity.

Government launches mobile app for real estate taxes

Egypt has announced the launch of its first mobile application for real estate tax services, as part of ongoing efforts to expand the country's digital transformation.

The application allows property owners to submit tax declarations electronically, make advance tax payments, settle outstanding liabilities, and apply for tax exemptions related to a family's primary residence.

According to an official statement, the app offers a unified declaration feature for individuals who own multiple properties, allowing them to submit a single tax return covering all their assets.

The platform also recognizes electronic payment receipts as proof of payment, eliminating the need for paper documentation in many procedures.

The launch is part of the government's broader strategy to modernize tax administration, improve service delivery, and encourage greater use of digital channels.

Ahram Online, June, 20

New 'Startup Egypt' platform supports entrepreneurship

The Ministry of Investment and Foreign Trade has launched the "Startup Egypt" platform to support the entrepreneurial ecosystem and accelerate startup growth.

Speaking at the launch, Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade Mohamed Farid described startups as key drivers of economic growth and job creation. He noted the platform is the first of its kind to directly connect entrepreneurs with government entities, investors, and financing institutions, thereby supporting policy development, institutional dialogue, and business expansion.

He added that the main challenge facing startups lies not only in securing early-stage funding but also in securing financing for later stages of growth. That has prompted cooperation with the Sovereign Fund to develop new investment mechanisms, including a venture capital company to be listed on the stock exchange. The proposed company is expected to encourage major financial institutions – such as insurance firms, pension funds, and banks – to increase indirect investments in startups and to offer more flexible exit mechanisms through capital markets.kets.

Farid also said the Ministry of Investment and the General Authority for Investment and Free Zones are advancing reforms to support startups, with a new regulatory package and amendments to the executive regulations of the Companies Law nearing completion to simplify procedures and modernize financing tools.

Egypt Today, June 17

Egypt named guest of honor at French Book Fair

Egypt has been selected as the Guest of Honor at the 2027 French Book Fair following discussions in Paris between Minister of Culture Jehan Zaki and French Culture Minister Catherine Pégard. The designation will place Egyptian literature and culture at the center of the event's program.

The talks also resulted in a broader framework for cultural cooperation between the two countries, including plans to establish a partnership with France's National Center for Cinema focused on preserving film archives and cinematic heritage.

Coordination is also underway with the National Library of France to launch joint initiatives, while Zaki held discussions with its president, historian Gilles Pécout, to enhance institutional cooperation. The two sides further explored the organization of joint events to honor Tharwat Okasha and André Malraux, both of whom were associated with the development of public culture in Egypt and France.

SceneNow, May 19

The *Journal* OF THE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN EGYPT

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