SILK ROAD FINANCE & TECHNOLOGY FORUM

24-26 AUG 2026

TASHKENT, UZBEKISTAN

AGENDA

Agenda Updated: 2026-08-22 21:36

Co-organised by

The Central Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan

GFTN

Co-hosted by

Ant International

Strategic partners

The Government Portal of the Republic of Uzbekistan

MINISTRY OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN

NAPP

SILK ROAD FINANCE & TECHNOLOGY FORUM
24-26 AUG 2026
TASHKENT, UZBEKISTAN

FORUM OVERVIEW

Monday 24 August	Tuesday 25 August	Wednesday 26 August	Thursday 27 August
Forum Stage Dialogues Headline Keynotes and Conversations		**Azimuth** Finding True North in the Islamic Digital Economy Keynotes and panels on digital Islamic Finance infrastructure, Shariah governance, and sovereign capital	**Cultural Heritage Experience at Samarkand** (Optional)
Investor Hours Curated Space for Investor-Startup Engagement **Ecosystem Showcase** Open Platform showcasing industry Innovation, Technology Demonstrations, and Marketing			
GFTN Insights2040 Closed-Door Public-Private Roundtables with Regulators, Policymakers & Senior Industry Leaders			
VIP Dinner (by invitation)	**Networking Reception**	**Azimuth Tour**	

Get Your Pass

Monday, 24 August 2026

Forum Stage

Mon, Aug 24 24 Aug, 10:25am - 10:40am Central Asian Expocenter (CAEx)	**State of Financial Sector Innovation** Uzbekistan's national narrative in the Governor's own voice - one year of progress & the road ahead. **Speaker:** **H.E. Timur Ishmetov**, Governor, Central Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan
Mon, Aug 24 24 Aug, 10:40am - 11:15am Central Asian Expocenter (CAEx)	**How Does Uzbekistan Build a Financial Centre that Serves People, Businesses and Capital?** Financial centres are often described through buildings, tax regimes and international rankings. Their real test is simpler: do they make it easier for people to save and invest, for businesses to raise capital and manage risk, and for the country to connect to wider financial markets? Uzbekistan is now putting the institutions of a modern financial centre in place. The next task is to turn ambition into everyday value. That means building regulatory credibility, talent, trusted infrastructure and market depth in the right order - while ensuring that international capital and financial services are connected to the needs of local businesses and households, rather than operating as a separate enclave. This leadership conversation examines how financial centres evolve in practice. What has to be built first? Which financial needs should a new centre solve before it seeks global scale? How can public policy, central-bank oversight and private-sector participation reinforce one another? And what lessons can Uzbekistan draw from centres that have succeeded by evolving with the needs of their people, enterprises and investors? Audience will leave with: • A practical definition of what a financial centre should deliver beyond buildings, branding and regulatory incentives. • A clearer view of the sequencing required: trust, regulation, talent, infrastructure, liquidity and real customer demand. • A framework for ensuring that the Tashkent International Financial Centre supports the domestic economy while connecting Uzbekistan to international capital and services. **Speakers:** **Abror Mirzo Olimov**, Deputy Chairman & Member of the Board, Central Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan **Nodirjon Juraev**, Project Coordinator, Office of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan **Moderator:** **Neil Parekh**, Group Deputy Chairman, Global Finance & Technology Network (GFTN); Vice Chairman, Asia Pacific, SMBC & Former Nominated Member of Parliament, Singapore, Global Finance & Technology Network

Mon, Aug 24 24 Aug, 11:15am - 12:00pm Central Asian Expocenter (CAEx)	**Global Payments in Motion - Connecting Central Asia to Global Markets** Global experts map how real-time rails, cross-border interoperability are defining the movement of money. The panel zeroes in on Central Asia's path to plug its domestic systems into global corridors, trade and remittance flows. **Speakers:** **Ari Sarker**, Former President, Asia Pacific, Mastercard **Arif Khan**, Chief Innovation Officer, Razorpay **David Kleiman**, Chief Executive Officer, Klearium Inc **Sergio Mello**, Global Head of Stablecoin Solutions, Anchorage Digital **Moderator:** **Iqbal Jumabhoy**, Chief Executive Officer, Edge Capital Pte Ltd
Mon, Aug 24 24 Aug, 12:00pm - 12:45pm Central Asian Expocenter (CAEx)	**Trusted Rails for Cross Border Commerce on the Silk Road** As commerce turns cross-border and real-time, trust becomes the currency of connectivity. This panel examines how secure, interoperable payment networks — tokenisation, fraud intelligence and shared standards — can turn Central Asia's growing digital economy into a gateway for regional and global trade, giving consumers and businesses the confidence to transact beyond borders and plug the region into the world's commerce flows. **Speakers:** **Aleksey Maslov**, Advisor to the Chairman, HUMO **Anvar Sadikovich Isamukhamedov**, Chief Executive Officer, JSC PAYNET **Naveed Arshad Khawaja**, Director Strategy & Business Growth, Parkin PJSC **Prajit Nanu**, Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Nium **Yevgen Lisnyak**, Vice President, Head of Strategic Partnerships, Fintech, Acquiring & Merchants, CISSEE region, Visa **Moderator:** **Navin Suri**, Senior Advisor, Global Finance & Technology Network (GFTN)
Mon, Aug 24 24 Aug, 2:00pm - 2:35pm Central Asian Expocenter (CAEx)	**Regulating the Frontier - AI & Tokenization Spotlight** Global experts test the hypothesis whether regulation can keep pace with AI, tokenization and a fast-evolving technology stack. Discussion turns to Central Asia's readiness to supervise, sandbox and scale innovation. **Speakers:** **Bilal Bin Saqib**, Chairman, Pakistan Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority **H.E. Chea Serey**, Governor, National Bank of Cambodia **H.E. Vusal Khalilov**, Deputy Governor, Central Bank of Azerbaijan **Moderator:** **Dr. Odiljon Abdurazzakov**, Dean, School of Management at New Uzbekistan University

Mon, Aug 24
24 Aug, 2:35pm - 3:15pm

Central Asian Expocenter (CAEx)

The Next Financial Frontier: Reinventing Money, Markets and Institutions

AI, tokenisation, programmable money and digital-native financial institutions are converging to reshape the architecture of finance. While regulation determines what is possible today, the bigger question is what financial system Central Asia should be building for tomorrow. This panel brings together policymakers, central bankers and industry pioneers to examine how emerging technologies will redefine money, markets and financial institutions—and what strategic choices today's leaders must make to position the region for the next decade.

Speakers:
Achilov Nodirbek, Deputy Chairman & Member of the Board, Central Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan
Anastasia Yugova, Strategy & Growth Advisor, previous-TON Foundation CIS Lead, AskAlem
Dan Sleep, Head of Business Solutions & Advisory, APAC, Fireblocks
Gulanor Atobek, Chief Executive Officer, Alif Bank
Nobuya Kawasaki, President Director, PT. Bank Danamon Indonesia, Tbk

Moderator:
Arjun Vir Singh, Partner, Global Head of Fintech & Digital Assets, Arthur D. Little

Mon, Aug 24
24 Aug, 3:15pm - 4:05pm

Central Asian Expocenter (CAEx)

Scaling International Investment in Central Asia: What Comes Next?

Speakers:
Bobur Khodjaev, Head, Department of Financial Technologies, Digitalization & Artificial Intelligence, Presidential Administration
Marius Dan, Chief Executive Officer of Central Asia, Franklin Templeton
Roman Rybalkin, Director, S&P Global Ratings
Sopnendu Mohanty, Group Chief Executive Officer, Global Finance & Technology Network (GFTN)
H.E. Timur Ishmetov, Governor, Central Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Moderator:
Louise Lucas, Lex Writer, Financial Times

Mon, Aug 24
24 Aug, 4:05pm - 5:05pm

Central Asian Expocenter (CAEx)

AI Showcase

Startup Innovations is a presentation panel featuring the most promising AI-driven startup projects. Innovative teams will pitch their solutions to experts, investors, and industry leaders, highlighting the latest breakthroughs in artificial intelligence. They include:
SmartUp : CRM / SME tech
LAYF : e-commerce
Cerberus : cybersecurity
Paylov : payments ecosystem
ipak.ai : voice AI
Instateka : digitisation of mortgage transactions
pDaftar.uz : financial accounting for businesses
FINQ : AI-powered lending management
FLOTT : AI-powered credit scoring
DocuMind AI : enterprise AI assistant

Mon, Aug 24
24 Aug, 5:10pm - 6:10pm

Central Asian Expocenter (CAEx)

AI Showcase: Banking Solutions

A session dedicated to the application of AI in the banking sector, presenting cutting-edge AI solutions developed for the financial industry from customer service automation to risk management and fraud prevention. They include AI project presentations by:

The Central Bank
Sanoatqurilishbank (SQB)
O‘zmilliybank
Octobank
Xalq banki
Aloqabank
with Closing Remarks, panel wrap-up and a Photo Session

Monday, 24 August 2026

Public-Private Dialogues

Mon, Aug 24
24 Aug, 4:00pm - 5:30pm

CAEx Roundtable Room 3

The Interoperability Frontier - Aligning National Digital Stacks with Global Financial Corridors

While discussions of open finance & real-time payment systems are proliferating across developing regions like Central Asia (fueled by rapid public-sector digitalisation, instant payments & interoperable QR codes) they frequently remain "closed gardens." This roundtable addresses the technical & regulatory "connectors" needed to bridge these domestic sovereign stacks with global liquidity hubs & international payment networks.

The session will examine how emerging national infrastructure initiatives (including consent-based data sharing under Open Finance frameworks, e-KYC, and early DLT or stable token use cases) can scale beyond local borders without undermining systemic resilience or consumer trust. Participants will explore the delicate balance between safeguarding national data sovereignty & creating the open, competitive cross-border architecture necessary for a truly seamless financial corridor.

Speakers:
Bogdan Vacusta, Chairman, Blockchain Intelligence Professionals Association & Strategy Consultant, National Bank of Romania
H.E. Chea Serey, Governor, National Bank of Cambodia
David Katz, Vice President for Strategy & Public Policy, Asia Pacific, Circle
Gábor Szőcs, Executive Director for International Relations, Central Bank of Hungary
Lucas Yang, Head of Sales & Solutions, Cobo
Michael Pearce, Head of Central Bank Solutions, Klearium Group
Mo Ali Yusuf, Chief Executive Officer, Fuze
Pavel Khristolyubov, Chief Operating Officer, Wallet in Telegram
Rajesh Sabari, Chief Commercial Officer, Liminal Custody
Sergio Mello, Global Head of Stablecoin Solutions, Anchorage Digital
Sharon Yuen, Head of Business Development APAC, Kaleido
Tamta Ivanishvili, Partner, Chief Executive Officer, BLC Law Office
Waleed Sadek, Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Fintra Holding
Tīna Lūse, Managing Director of the Fintech Latvia Association, Fintech Latvia Association

Moderators:
Anikó Szombati, Senior Subject Matter Expert, Global Finance & Technology Network (GFTN)
Maha El Dimachki, Chief Executive Officer, GFTN Solutions, Global Finance & Technology Network (GFTN)

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Mon, Aug 24
24 Aug, 4:00pm - 5:30pm

CAEx Roundtable Room 1

Navigating the Open Finance Ultimatum - Redefining Reciprocity Between Incumbents & Fintechs

Open Banking is often a one-way street where incumbents provide data and fintechs take value. This session debates the creation of a "Smart Data" roadmap where data-sharing is incentivized through industry collaboration.

Speakers:
Guzal Rakhimova, Chief Project, Process & Data Officer, Central Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan
Alexey Ilyin, Chief Executive Officer, A+ Solutions
Alain Nounke, Regional Industry Manager, Financial Institutions Group, International Finance Corporation
Arif Khan, Chief Innovation Officer, Razorpay
Maja Pavlović-Bjeletić, Head of the Unit for Regulation & Development of the Payment System, National Bank of Serbia
Makoto Shibata, Head of FINOLAB, Chief Community Officer, FINOLAB Inc.
Otabek Kurbanov, Founder, Alphacon
Sergey Popov, Director, Head of Mastercard Advisors, Uzbekistan, Mastercard
Sung Kyun Son, General Director (Head of Global Business), Fintech Center Korea
Todd Schweitzer, Co-founder & Chief Executive Officer, Brankas
Walid Hassouna, Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Valu

Moderators:
Brian Yeoh, Senior Consultant, Global Finance & Technology Network (GFTN)
Chek-Tchung Foo, Director, Regulation & Policy, Global Finance & Technology Network (GFTN)

Mon, Aug 24
24 Aug, 4:00pm - 5:30pm

CAEx Roundtable Room 2

The Dual-Banking Blueprint - Scaling Sharia-Compliant Windows in Conventional Ecosystems

The global demand for Islamic finance is outstripping the technical capacity of conventional banking systems to support it. Early architectural and policy decisions - especially on tax neutrality and accounting segregation – will critically shape the scalability of Islamic finance institutions.

This session tackles the "plumbing" of dual-banking – focusing on how to build systems that are not only Shariah-compliant, but regionally interoperable and future-ready. As ecosystems in Central Asia and other regions (e.g. ASEAN) experience continued advancement in Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) and focus on expanding Shariah-compliant capital markets, the discussion will also examine how digital rails can unlock unprecedented cross-border investment flows, trade efficiency and financial inclusion.

Speakers:
Abdullo Kurbanov, Co-Founder of Alif Bank and Co-Founder & CEO, Ayan Capital
Akram Mackeen, Executive Vice President & Head, BaaS & Digital Ecosystem, Maybank Group Islamic Banking
Dr. Ashraf Md Hashim, Chairman, Shariah Advisory Council of Central Bank of Malaysia, Bank Negara Malaysia
Bakhrom Numonov, Council Chairman, Association of Islamic Finance & Takaful
Carrie Suen, Vice President, Head of Global Affairs & Strategic Development, Ant International
Dr. Dinesh Tripathi, Founder & Chief Executive Officer, WOW Finstack
Nobuya Kawasaki, President Director, PT. Bank Danamon Indonesia, Tbk
Yuri Presniakov, Counsel, Curtis LLC

Moderators:
Navin Suri, Senior Advisor, Global Finance & Technology Network (GFTN)
Arjun Vir Singh, Partner, Global Head of Fintech & Digital Assets, Arthur D. Little

Monday, 24 August 2026

Workshop

Get Your Pass

Tuesday, 25 August 2026

Forum Stage

Tue, Aug 25 25 Aug, 9:30am - 10:05am Central Asian Expocenter (CAEx)	**Welcome to Forum - Day 2** A brief framing of the day's journey — from policy-led conversations the previous day to technology and talent-oriented topics. **Speaker:** **Sharanjit Leyl**, MC, Chancellor, Bath Spa University
Tue, Aug 25 25 Aug, 10:05am - 10:15am Central Asian Expocenter (CAEx)	**Guest of Honour Opening: Technology for Regional Prosperity** A distinguished guest of honour opens Innovation Day with a vision for technology for regional prosperity and advancement of the fintech ecosystem. **Speaker:** **Nodirbek Saydullayev**, First Deputy Chairman, Central Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan
Tue, Aug 25 25 Aug, 10:15am - 10:30am Central Asian Expocenter (CAEx)	**How Networks Leapfrog Nations** This keynote will set out how technology, strong global networks, standards & partnerships can accelerate adoption of financial services in Central Asia & help the region leap onto the world's fintech stage. **Speaker:** **Dr. Patrick Njoroge**, Former Governor, Central Bank of Kenya
Tue, Aug 25 25 Aug, 10:30am - 11:15am Central Asian Expocenter (CAEx)	**The Frontier, Continued: Tokenization & Stablecoins** As money is rebuilt in three forms at once - private stablecoins, sovereign digital currencies and tokenised assets - this panel maps how each will rewire cross-border trade and settlement, how sovereign and private money compete and coexist, and the choices Central Asia must make i.e. what to issue, permit or build on. **Speakers:** **Mu Changchun**, Director - General, Digital Currency Institute, People's Bank of China **Pavel Khristolyubov**, Chief Operating Officer, Wallet in Telegram **Rajesh Sabari**, Chief Commercial Officer, Liminal Custody **Samigjon Inogamov**, Director, Monetary Policy Department, Central Bank of Republic of Uzbekistan **Dr. Saeeda Jaffar**, Managing Director, International, Circle **Hon. Vyacheslav Yurevich Pak**, First Deputy Director, National Agency of Perspective Projects **Moderator:** **Dr. Peter Gassmann**, Senior Partner, PwC Strategy&

Get Your Pass

Tue, Aug 25
25 Aug, 11:15am - 11:30am

Central Asian Expocenter (CAEx)

Beyond Technology: What Thailand Learned Building a Digital Financial System

Opening keynote by Dr Veerathai Santiprabhob, former Governor of the Bank of Thailand, on technology as a driver of regional prosperity and the growth of the fintech ecosystem.
Dr. Santiprabhob championed the Thailand's national e-paymet, PromptPay nationwide. He also Chaired the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) Central Bank Governance Group.

Speaker:
Dr. Veerathai Santiprabhob, Former Governor, Bank of Thailand

Tue, Aug 25
25 Aug, 11:30am - 12:05pm

Central Asian Expocenter (CAEx)

Can We Trust AI Without Trusting What Sits Beneath It?

AI is becoming part of how money moves, services are delivered and decisions are made. But AI is only as trustworthy as the systems beneath it: the data it draws on, the identities it verifies, the payment rails it touches and the governance that sets the boundaries.

This session brings those two questions together. What does responsible AI look like when it is used in financial services? And what must sit beneath it - trusted data, secure identity, resilient payment infrastructure, cloud and compute capacity - for people and institutions to use it with confidence?

For Central Asia, the practical challenge is to remain open to global technology while retaining control over the systems that matter most. What should be locally governed? What can be sourced globally? And how can public and private actors build intelligent financial services without compromising trust, resilience or sovereignty?

Speakers:
Alexander Simonenko, Chief Technical Officer, National Intellectual Solutions (Gorgona)
Arvind Sankaran, Senior Fintech Expert, Asian Development Bank
Sheruan Bashar, Deputy Head of LLC Main Information Center, Central Bank of Republic of Uzbekistan
Davit Melikidze, Chief Executive Officer, UzCard
Yanan Wu, Chief Executive Officer & Founder, Surfin Meta Digital Technology Pte. Ltd.

Moderator:
James Boey, Chief Executive Officer Asia & Co-Chief Executive Officer Forums, Global Finance & Technology Network

Tue, Aug 25
25 Aug, 12:05pm - 12:40pm

Central Asian Expocenter (CAEx)

Trust at the Speed of AI: Cyber Resilience & Fraud Defence for Payment Rails

As Central Asia scales instant payments and open finance, fraud and cyber risk scale with it. This session examines how banks, regulators and global networks jointly defend the payment rails in an AI era where it powers both the attack and the defence, and what resilient, trusted regional payments infrastructure requires

Speakers:
Mirzabek Bobojanov, Head of Unit, CERT-CBU Cybersecurity Center, Central Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan
Nikolai Belstein, Senior Director, Consulting & Analytics, VISA CEMEA
Umid Khakimov, Chief Executive Officer, Ipak Yuli Bank
Zokhir Mirzaev, Director of Information Security Department, Asakabank

Moderator:
Artem Saidov, Head of Cybersecurity, KPMG Uzbekistan

[Get Your Pass]

Tue, Aug 25
25 Aug, 1:40pm - 2:25pm

Central Asian Expocenter (CAEx)

Building the Open Ecosystem - Rails, Capital & the Rules That Connect Markets

Across the Silk Road nations, rapid digital transformation and deepening market integration are creating the conditions for a genuinely connected regional economy — but connectivity has to be built before it can be felt. This dialogue will examine the architecture that underpins open, embedded finance: the interoperable rails and open-finance standards that allow institutions to plug into one another, the capital required to finance the build, and the regional rulebook — interoperability, licensing and data governance — that turns separate national markets into a single connected system. Grounded in current industry practice, the discussion will explore what must exist technically, financially and institutionally for these shared foundations to hold across borders, and how the region can build them together.

Speakers:
Ahmet Kayhan, Group Chief Payments & Digital Assets Officer, VEON
Madhusudanan R, Co-founder, M2P Fintech
Otabek Nasirov, Chairman, Central Asian Fintech Association
Roman Tretyakov, Deputy Chairman of the Management Board for IT & Digital Transformation, Octobank
Stefan Klestil, General Partner, Speedinvest
Khusankhodja Abidov, Director for Strategy, Transformation & Project Management, Central Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Moderator:
Chek-Tchung Foo, Director, Regulation & Policy, Global Finance & Technology Network (GFTN)

Tue, Aug 25
25 Aug, 2:25pm - 3:05pm

Central Asian Expocenter (CAEx)

Embedded Finance in Action - The Last Mile, the SME & the Individual

Rails and capital are only worth what they deliver. This panel turns from how the ecosystem is built to what it actually changes on the ground - how embedded finance bridges the "last mile" of inclusion, puts credit and tools in the hands of small businesses, and reaches the individuals the traditional system never served. Grounded in what is working across the region today, the panel is clear-eyed about where embedded finance genuinely moves the needle for the real economy, and honest about where it still falls short.

Speakers:
Dilbar Abduganieva, Chief Financial Inclusion Officer, Central Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan
Dr. Kanokpan Lao-Araya, Country Director, Asian Development Bank Resident Mission in Uzbekistan
Naima Mirzaeva, Member of the Supervisory Board, Click
Rasulzhan Takhirovich Gulyamov, Chairman of the Supervisory Board, Uzum Bank
Todd Schweitzer, Co-founder & Chief Executive Officer, Brankas

Moderator:
Khyati Chauhan, Chief of Staff & Assistant Director, Strategy, Global Finance & Technology Network (GFTN)

Tue, Aug 25
25 Aug, 3:15pm - 3:55pm

Central Asian Expocenter (CAEx)

The School on the Silk Road: Demographic Dividend, or Demographic Debt?

Every great city on this road was also a school. Uzbekistan's median age is 27, and a Presidential Decree calls for 5,000 trained fintech professionals by 2030 — but a young population is only an advantage if it's activated. Talent is the input every other pillar depends on: no engineers, no ecosystem; no skilled supervisors, no safe infrastructure. This panel is about building that human capital deliberately — aligning universities, industry-led training and public programmes with what the market actually needs, financing it at scale, and, crucially, keeping the talent in the region once it's trained. The harder questions sit underneath the target: whether a degree still signals fintech-readiness or whether skills-first credentials do, who pays for training at national scale, and how a country turns a demographic bulge into an exportable strength rather than a wave of emigration.

Speakers:
Dr. Abdel Aziz Nossier, Executive Director, Egyptian Banking Institute
Gulnoza Ismailova, Executive Director of the "El-Yurt Umidi" Foundation for the Training of Prospective Personnel, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan
Leiming Chen, Senior Vice President & Chief Sustainability Officer, Ant International
Dr. Patrick Njoroge, Former Governor, Central Bank of Kenya

Moderator:
Pieter Franken, Professor & Founder, Keio University & Safecast

SILK ROAD FINANCE & TECHNOLOGY FORUM 24-26 AUG 2026 TASHKENT, UZBEKISTAN

Tuesday, 25 August 2026

Public-Private Dialogues

Tue, Aug 25
25 Aug, 4:00pm - 5:30pm

CAEx Roundtable Room 1

The Autonomy Paradox - Governing Agentic AI in Regulated Financial Markets & Digital Trust Systems

As AI systems become more autonomous in finance, they are also increasingly interacting with digital identity, authentication & fraud detection layers that are themselves under attack from AI-driven deception. This roundtable explores how regulators & institutions can govern fast-moving “agentic” systems while also ensuring trust in a world where even biometric verification & digital identity signals can be faked.

The discussion connects two converging risks: autonomous AI making high-speed financial decisions & AI-powered fraud undermining the reliability of identity, consent & authentication itself.

Tue, Aug 25
25 Aug, 4:00pm - 5:30pm

CAEx Roundtable Room 2

New Routes Home - Remittances for Central Asia’s Globalising Diaspora

Central Asia’s diaspora is increasingly taking root beyond traditional destinations, spreading through East Asia, Western Europe & the Arabian Gulf. This growing diversification helps protect remittances from overconcentrated geopolitical risk while preserving their critical contribution to economic growth. However, it also requires developing new channels & strengthening existing ones to support remittance flows.

This session explores how Central Asian jurisdictions can work together to provide safe, affordable & resilient remittance corridors that support the flow of funds between citizens abroad & communities at home.

Tue, Aug 25
25 Aug, 4:00pm - 5:15pm

CAEx Roundtable Room 3

The Skills-First Revolution - Academic Credentials versus Industry-Led Competencies

The gap between computer science degrees & fintech-ready engineering is widening. This session looks at the global shift toward vocational "Skills Passports" & how to scale high-tier technical talent in regions with young, under-utilized populations.

Silk Road Finance & Technology Forum 24-26 Aug 2026 Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Tuesday, 25 August 2026

Workshop

Tue, Aug 25 25 Aug, 11:45am - 12:00pm CAEx Roundtable Room 2	**Building the Most Accessible Fintech HUB – Gateway to the EU Market** Latvian ecosystem, licensing offer and support tools **Speaker:** **Tīna Lūse**, Managing Director of the Fintech Latvia Association, Fintech Latvia Association
Tue, Aug 25 25 Aug, 12:00pm - 12:15pm CAEx Roundtable Room 2	**Banking and Fintech Collaboration, and the Future of Banking — Building Products Fintechs Can Benefit From** Latvian ecosystem, licensing offer and support tools **Speaker:**
Tue, Aug 25 25 Aug, 12:15pm - 1:00pm CAEx Roundtable Room 2	**The Talent Scene in the Baltics and Europe, and the Potential for Collaboration** **Speaker:** **Evita Lune**, Equity Partner, Global Head of FinTech Practice, Regional Manager Baltics, Pedersen & Partners
Tue, Aug 25 25 Aug, 2:00pm - 2:30pm CAEx Level 2 Workshop Room	**Can You Move This Money? Designing Payment Routes for the Future - Powered by Klearium** Cross-border payments across Central Asia and the emerging-market corridors that feed it are throttled by infrastructure gaps, liquidity constraints and mounting compliance pressure. In this hands-on workshop, participants route real, anonymised transactions through some of the world's most complex corridors, testing what actually makes a payment possible, compliant and commercially viable, and drawing out the design principles for the payment routes the region needs to build next. **Speakers:** **Fred Leadsom**, Chief Technology Officer, Klearium Group **Priscilla Vencat**, Technology Lead: Klearium Group , Klearium Group

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Tue, Aug 25 25 Aug, 2:00pm - 2:30pm CAEx Roundtable Room 2	**Speed vs Clarity: Rethinking Customer Onboarding** — How customer expectations around onboarding are shifting in digital finance, and where the real line sits between speed and genuine understanding; — Whether speed and clarity are truly a trade-off, or whether onboarding can activate fast and still teach the user just-in-time, inside the product; — What "responsible speed" looks like — fast enough to keep the customer, careful enough to keep the bank and the customer safe; — Financial literacy as a design constraint: how much explaining a product owes its customer, and at what moment it matters most; — What the next generation of onboarding will need to get right, in a market where digital adoption is moving faster than trust can naturally catch up. **Speakers:** **Robert Vaganian**, Director of Growth & Monetization, AVO Bank **Ondrej Grich**, Chief Technology Officer, Deputy Chairman of the Management Board, AVO Bank **Igor Kim**, Chief Product Officer, Deputy Chairman of the Management Board, AVO Bank **Oleksandr Simeiko**, Chief Risk Officer, Board Member, AVO Bank
Tue, Aug 25 25 Aug, 3:00pm - 3:30pm CAEx Level 2 Workshop Room	**Stablecoins: Real-world Use Cases in Asia and the New Silk Road - Powered by Cobo** Stablecoin adoption is accelerating across Asia, from Southeast Asia's fast-growing fintech hubs to the emerging markets of Central Asia along the New Silk Road. In this fireside chat, we will examine where real-world usage is taking hold across the region, from B2B trade settlement and OTC desks processing hundreds of millions in USDT, to fintechs enabling cross-border remittances and retail payment solutions serving consumers and businesses alike. The session will also explore how stablecoin use cases are evolving across Asia, with markets at different stages of adopting digital asset infrastructure and developing regulatory frameworks for stable tokens. Attendees will walk away with: • A grounded view of stablecoin adoption trends across Asia and the New Silk Road corridor • Insights into the digital asset infrastructure landscape across the region • Practical guidance on compliance and custody considerations for institutions at different stages of adoption • A clearer sense of where the most significant market opportunities are emerging **Speaker:** **Lucas Yang**, Head of Sales & Solutions, Cobo

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SILK ROAD FINANCE & TECHNOLOGY FORUM 24-26 AUG 2026 TASHKENT, UZBEKISTAN

Wednesday, 26 August 2026

Forum Stage

Wed, Aug 26 26 Aug, 10:00am - 10:10am Islamic Civilisation Centre (ICC)	**Setting the Azimuth: Why Tashkent, Why Now** An azimuth is a bearing - the angle between true north and the direction you are pointed. The Silk Road wasn't a road and wasn't about silk - it was the world's first network for moving value and trust across dozens of borders with no single owner. Central Asia wasn't even a stop on it; Samarkand and Bukhara were the switchboard. And the technology that moved the money was Islamic finance; a sakk let a merchant put gold down in Baghdad and draw its value in Cairo, the same word that gives us both sukuk and cheque. Then the world went to sea and the centre of gravity moved off this map for five centuries. The day's argument: it's moving back - the cargo is now data and capital, the road is digital rails, and the charter was signed eight weeks ago. That's the global movement we're starting. In this room. Today. **Speakers:** **Sagari White**, Head of Startups & Signature Programmes, Global Finance & Technology Network (GFTN) **Navin Suri**, Senior Advisor, Global Finance & Technology Network (GFTN)
Wed, Aug 26 26 Aug, 10:10am - 10:20am Islamic Civilisation Centre (ICC)	**The Sovereign Case: Islamic Finance as National Strategy** On 27 March 2026, the President signed Law ZRU-1126. On 29 June it came into force, creating a dual banking system in which Shariah-compliant institutions operate alongside conventional ones on equal legal footing - with a Council for Islamic Finance seated at the Central Bank, a dedicated licensing regime, and tax neutrality including VAT exemption on sukuk and Islamic leasing. For a constitutionally secular state, it is a bet on capital, on the informal economy, and on Uzbekistan's position between the Gulf, South Asia and the post-Soviet space. The Minister makes the case. **Speaker:** **H.E. Jamshid Kuchkarov**, Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Economy & Finance, Republic of Uzbekistan
Wed, Aug 26 26 Aug, 10:20am - 11:00am Islamic Civilisation Centre (ICC)	**Azimuth Dialogue 1: Building the Rails: What Has to Exist Before Anything Scales** Real-time payment systems now move trillions across the world's economies — instant, interoperable, world-class rails for conventional money. For Islamic finance, those rails barely exist. That gap is the panel. Globally there are 484 Islamic fintech firms across 41 countries — and 80% of them sit in just ten. The IFSB's own reports keep returning to the same diagnosis: underdeveloped market infrastructure, thin local-currency sovereign issuance, low trading volumes. Not a demand problem but a plumbing problem. Builders argue about what gets laid first. **Speakers:** **H.E. Arifa Ala**, Senior Assistant Governor, Bangko Sentral Ng Pilipinas **Dr. Ashraf Md Hashim**, Chairman, Shariah Advisory Council of Central Bank of Malaysia, Bank Negara Malaysia **Jahanzeb Khan**, Chief Executive Officer & President, Easypaisa Digital Bank **Vince Henry Iswaratioso**, Chief Executive Officer & Co-founder, DANA **Moderator:** **Arjun Vir Singh**, Partner, Global Head of Fintech & Digital Assets, Arthur D. Little

Wed, Aug 26
26 Aug, 11:00am - 11:15am

Islamic Civilisation Centre (ICC)

Standards Before Scale: Prudential Foundations of Islamic Digital Finance

Islamic finance is now a global system, but its next chapter will be shaped by whether prudential standards and technology evolve together. Fintech can widen access, reduce friction and make Shariah-compliant products more relevant to customers and businesses. But digital scale only lasts when supervision, risk management, liquidity, data governance and Shariah oversight keep pace.

Drawing on the global Islamic-finance landscape, this keynote examines what regulators and standard setters are seeing across markets: where fintech is creating genuine inclusion and efficiency, where it is introducing new vulnerabilities, and how emerging ecosystems can move from experimentation to trusted scale. For markets beginning a new chapter - including Uzbekistan and others across Central Asia - the opportunity is to build to international standards from day one, rather than retrofit trust later.

Speaker:
Dr. Ghiath Shabsigh, Secretary-General, Islamic Financial Services Board

Wed, Aug 26
26 Aug, 11:15am - 11:35am

Islamic Civilisation Centre (ICC)

Azimuth Fireside: Strategy and Capacity - What It Actually Takes to Build a National Islamic Finance System

A national Islamic finance strategy is easy to write. It is hard to execute. The gap between the two is almost always the same: the supervisors, institutions, and workforce needed to implement it do not yet exist when the policy is signed. Turkey published its first Participation Finance Strategy in 2022. Egypt has been building Islamic finance infrastructure for decades. Both have learned that sequencing matters as much as ambition — and that what gets built in the first three years determines whether a market scales or stalls.
This session puts the policy architect and the capacity builder in conversation: what does a second-generation strategy look like, and what does the first generation teach you about what to build before you write it? For Uzbekistan, which has the law and the mandate, the question is not whether — it is in what order. Audience will leave with a clear framework for sequencing strategy and capacity, and a practical read on what to prioritise now from 2 countries that have already made the mistakes.

Speakers:
Dr. Abdel Aziz Nossier, Executive Director, Egyptian Banking Institute
Dr. Tarik Akin, Head of the Finance Department, Investment & Finance Office of the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye

Moderator:
Sopnendu Mohanty, Group Chief Executive Officer, Global Finance & Technology Network (GFTN)

SILK ROAD FINANCE & TECHNOLOGY FORUM | 24-26 AUG 2026
TASHKENT, UZBEKISTAN

Wed, Aug 26 26 Aug, 11:35am - 12:15pm Islamic Civilisation Centre (ICC)	**Azimuth Dialogue 2: The Last Mile Already Has a Phone - Shariah-Compliant Finance for the Unbanked** The World Bank's Global Findex 2025 counts 1.3 billion adults without a financial account. Roughly 900 Mn of them own a mobile phone; about 530 million carry a smartphone. Half the world's unbanked live in just eight economies - five of them OIC member states. So, arguably, distribution is largely solved. What isn't solved is underwriting someone with no credit file, no collateral and no formal income - and doing it within Shariah constraints that rule out the interest-rate pricing conventional risk models are built on. That is where AI earns its keep, or doesn't. This panel makes the case for technology as the engine of shared prosperity and is honest about the part that's still hard. **Speakers:** **Akram Mackeen**, Executive Vice President & Head, BaaS & Digital Ecosystem, Maybank Group Islamic Banking **Budi Gandasoebrata**, Managing Director Fintech, DSST Communication & Technology, SinarMas Group **Nafees Khundker**, Group Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer, Muslim Pro App **Quan Yu**, SVP, General Manager, Bettr Credit Services, Ant International **Rosalia De Leon**, Member of the Monetary Board, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas **Moderator:** **Maha El Dimachki**, Chief Executive Officer, GFTN Solutions, Global Finance & Technology Network (GFTN)
Wed, Aug 26 26 Aug, 12:15pm - 1:15pm Islamic Civilisation Centre (ICC)	**Delegate Networking Lunch: The Dastarkhan** The dastarkhan is the cloth, the table, and the code of conduct around both. Nobody eats until everyone is seated. The bread is torn, never cut. The guest is fed before the host. It is the oldest technology in this building for turning strangers into people who owe each other something - and for a thousand years it did on the Silk Road exactly what this forum is trying to do now. One hour, one table, the morning's arguments continued over food. Come hungry and sit next to someone you disagreed with.
Wed, Aug 26 26 Aug, 1:15pm - 1:55pm Islamic Civilisation Centre (ICC)	**Azimuth Dialogue 3: Can You Code Shariah Compliance?** Code needs a specification. Shariah interpretation doesn't have one yet. AAOIFI's Shariah Standard No. 62 - which would force real legal transfer of assets to sukuk holders and kill guaranteed returns - has been in consultation since November 2023 and isn't final. AAOIFI's standards are adopted fully, partially or as guidance across roughly 21 jurisdictions; Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia, between them about 68% of 2024 sukuk issuance, don't mandate them at all. Meanwhile the IFSB's 2026 report flags "hybrid risks" - Islamic products drifting close enough to conventional banking that the prudential frameworks no longer catch what's underneath. You cannot compile a rule that scholars haven't settled. So, what can be embedded in the infrastructure, and what has to stay human? **Speakers:** **Bakhrom Numonov**, Council Chairman, Association of Islamic Finance & Takaful **Farrukh Raza**, Chairman, IFAAS Group **Ghulam Muhammad Abbasi**, Executive Director - Islamic Finance Group, State Bank of Pakistan **Jakhongir Imamnazarov**, Founder, Islamic Business & Finance Ltd **Moderator:** **Khondamir Nusratkhujaev**, Lead, Financial Control Department , IsDB

Wed, Aug 26
26 Aug, 1:55pm - 2:35pm

Islamic Civilisation Centre (ICC)

Azimuth Dialogue 4: A $6 Trillion Corridor? The Industry Can't Yet Agree on Its Own Size

Start with the number in the title. DinarStandard puts global Islamic finance assets at $5.99 trillion for 2024, heading to $9.72 trillion by 2029. For that same year, 2024, the IFSB - the industry's prudential standard-setter, working from regulators' own supervisory returns - puts them at $3.88 trillion. Same industry, same year, a gap of roughly $2.1 trillion. That is not a rounding error. It is a statement about what gets counted, what gets reported, and where the capital actually sits. What both agree on: sukuk outstanding crossed $1 trillion in 2025, and the growth is now coming from Africa and Central Asia. So - is there a corridor here, or a very good story? The panel sizes the flow and shows it's working.

Speakers:
Ahrorjon Sadullaev, Member of Islamic Finance Committee, Central Bank of Uzbekistan & Managing Partner, Orient Audit Group LLC
Amir Merchant, Chief Executive Officer, Sovereign Gulf Partners
Hamza Bawazir, Secretary General, General Council for Islamic Banks & Financial Institutions
Mustafa Adil, Head of Islamic Finance, London Stock Exchange Group

Moderator:
Bakhrom Juraev, Deputy Director, Department for Regulation of Credit Organizations & Head of the Thematic Project Office for Islamic Finance Development, Central Bank of Republic of Uzbekistan

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Wed, Aug 26
26 Aug, 2:35pm - 2:40pm

Islamic Civilisation Centre (ICC)

Welcome to The Founders Peak™: Startup Lessons That Cross Borders

A rare hour with founders, local and international, who've built companies from the ground up and will tell the untold parts nobody usually hears. The near-misses, the hard-won wins, the lessons that only come from doing it. Venture building in Central Asia is young and accelerating fast. The opportunities are wide open, and there's never been a better moment to build from here. The Founders Peak™ comes to Tashkent.

Wed, Aug 26
26 Aug, 2:40pm - 2:50pm

Islamic Civilisation Centre (ICC)

Roman Lavrentyev's Untold Founder Story

Five incredible hand-picked founder stories and their lived experiences - packed With usable insights and "unavailable wisdom". Exceptional start-up founders from Central Asia and beyond take the "yellow circle" to open up about their personal struggles and challenges, so that these stories may be a source of learning, encouragement, and inspiration for other entrepreneurs.

Unfiltered, untold, unedited.

Speaker:

Wed, Aug 26
26 Aug, 2:50pm - 3:00pm

Islamic Civilisation Centre (ICC)

Just Fly the Plane

Five incredible hand-picked founder stories and their lived experiences - packed With usable insights and "unavailable wisdom". Exceptional start-up founders from Central Asia and beyond take the "yellow circle" to open up about their personal struggles and challenges, so that these stories may be a source of learning, encouragement, and inspiration for other entrepreneurs.

Unfiltered, untold, unedited.

Speaker:
Gaurav Mathur, Founder & Managing Director, SafeGold

Get Your Pass

Wed, Aug 26 26 Aug, 3:00pm - 3:10pm Islamic Civilisation Centre (ICC)	**What I Was Really Afraid Of** Five incredible hand-picked founder stories and their lived experiences - packed With usable insights and "unavailable wisdom". Exceptional start-up founders from Central Asia and beyond take the "yellow circle" to open up about their personal struggles and challenges, so that these stories may be a source of learning, encouragement, and inspiration for other entrepreneurs. Unfiltered, untold, unedited. **Speaker:** **Otabek Kurbanov**, Founder, Alphacon
Wed, Aug 26 26 Aug, 3:10pm - 3:20pm Islamic Civilisation Centre (ICC)	**Early isn't fatal. Waiting for the rescue is.** Five incredible hand-picked founder stories and their lived experiences - packed With usable insights and "unavailable wisdom". Exceptional start-up founders from Central Asia and beyond take the "yellow circle" to open up about their personal struggles and challenges, so that these stories may be a source of learning, encouragement, and inspiration for other entrepreneurs. Unfiltered, untold, unedited. **Speaker:** **Todd Schweitzer**, Co-founder & Chief Executive Officer, Brankas
Wed, Aug 26 26 Aug, 3:20pm - 3:30pm Islamic Civilisation Centre (ICC)	**I Never Left Medicine - Only Changed the Patient.** Five incredible hand-picked founder stories and their lived experiences - packed With usable insights and "unavailable wisdom". Exceptional start-up founders from Central Asia and beyond take the "yellow circle" to open up about their personal struggles and challenges, so that these stories may be a source of learning, encouragement, and inspiration for other entrepreneurs. Unfiltered, untold, unedited. **Speaker:** **Waleed Sadek**, Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Fintra Holding

Wed, Aug 26
26 Aug, 3:35pm - 4:15pm

Islamic Civilisation Centre (ICC)

Investor Dialogue: Show Me the Money - What It Actually Takes to Get Capital Into Central Asia

The $50 million CBU venture fund is new. The 200-fintech target is set. The presidential mandate is signed. What is not yet settled is whether international capital follows — and on what terms. Central Asia has produced its first unicorn-adjacent exits, its first institutional VC funds, and its first cross-border fintech infrastructure. It has not yet produced a consistent answer to the question every founder in this room is asking: what does a startup built here have to look like before it gets a term sheet from someone outside the region?

This panel does not traffic in diplomatic answers. The investors on stage have deployed here, lost here, and backed the exits. They know the difference between a market that is genuinely untapped and one that is structurally uninvestable — and they know which parts of Central Asia are which. The audience will leave with a real bar: what the ecosystem needs to clear before the next wave of capital arrives, and how long that takes if the work starts now. A frank assessment of where Central Asia sits on the global VC map — and what moves the needle The specific structural changes — regulatory, infrastructure, talent — that unlock the next tier of international capital Which sectors and markets are ready now, and which are still two cycles.

Speakers:
Adil Nurgozhin, Managing Partner, Big Sky Capital
Andi Aranitasi, Director, Head of Uzbekistan, European Bank for Reconstruction & Development
Kiyan Zandiyeh, Chief Executive Officer, Sturgeon Capital
Melissa Frakman, Chief Executive Officer & Founding Partner, EMVC
Pedro Vieira, Managing Partner, 500 Global

Moderator:
Abdulazal Toshkhujaev, Managing Partner/Deputy CEO, UzVC

Wed, Aug 26
26 Aug, 4:15pm - 4:55pm

Islamic Civilisation Centre (ICC)

Capital Meets Builders: What It Takes to Scale Islamic Fintech Beyond the Top Ten

The investor conversation has set the bar. Now the builders respond. Central Asia is no longer invisible: it has real platforms, new capital, a growing fintech base and an Islamic-finance market beginning to take shape. But the real test is whether founders can build products that customers trust, investors can back them with conviction, and institutions can create the rails that allow them to scale beyond a single market.

This is a direct conversation between the people building companies, deploying capital and shaping the ecosystem around them. Is the problem that Central Asia is under-covered, under-capitalised or under-connected? Why does 80% of Islamic fintech still sit in ten countries? And which constraint binds first - regulation, capital, talent, distribution or customer trust?

Audience will leave with:

- The investor and operator test for what makes a fintech ecosystem genuinely investable.
- A practical view of the conditions that allow Islamic-finance startups to scale across markets.
- A short list of actions for founders, investors, banks and policymakers over the next 12 months.

Speakers:
Dalerkhon Nodirov, Chief Executive Officer, IT Park Ventures
Michael Lints, Founding Partner MENA, Golden Gate Ventures
Shota Lomtadze, Partner, BR Capital
Zuhursho Rahmatulloev, Co-Founder, Alif & Ayan Capital

Moderator:
Shokhrukh Yulchiev, Managing Director, Central Asia, Silkbridge Ventures

Get Your Pass

Wed, Aug 26 26 Aug, 4:55pm - 5:05pm Islamic Civilisation Centre (ICC)	**A Final Fix on True North: The Azimuth Intent** Five minutes to fix where the day landed, name what was agreed and what wasn't, and hand the room a charge. From there, the stage is taken to announce the Azimuth Commitment: a shared statement of intent from the Islamic finance community to begin working together on two things - a cross-border regulatory sandbox and coordinated customer education. A public commitment, made in Tashkent, by the people in the room: to build an Islamic digital economy that is open across borders, trusted by communities, powered by innovation, and accessible to everyone. **Speakers:** **H.E. Timur Ishmetov**, Governor, Central Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan **Sopnendu Mohanty**, Group Chief Executive Officer, Global Finance & Technology Network (GFTN)
Wed, Aug 26 26 Aug, 5:15pm - 8:15pm Islamic Civilisation Centre (ICC)	**Closing Reception & Tour of the Islamic Civilisation Centre** An invitation-only session for founders and venture capitalists — capped by a tour of the Centre.

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