TIIF-2026 Showed Uzbekistan’s New Ambition: To Become the Financial and Logistics Hub of the Region – Alona Lebedieva


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KYIV, UKRAINE, June 19, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The fifth Tashkent International Investment Forum, one of the key investment events in Central Asia, has concluded in Tashkent. This year, the forum brought together more than 8,300 registered participants, including over 3,400 foreign delegates from 100 countries. Participants included representatives of international financial institutions, governments, investment funds and global companies with combined assets of around $42 trillion. Investment proposals worth approximately €75 billion in the areas of energy, transport, logistics, digital infrastructure and industrial development were also presented to investors.

One of the main signals of the forum was its focus on institutional change. President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev announced the creation of the Tashkent International Financial Center – a special financial center with tax and customs incentives, free movement of capital, the possibility of settlements in any currency, an independent financial regulator and a legal framework based on the principles of English law. In essence, this is an attempt to create a separate financial jurisdiction in Tashkent that should function not only as a platform for attracting capital, but also as an instrument of long-term trust in the market.

According to Alona Lebedieva, owner of the Ukrainian diversified industrial and investment group Aurum Group, this particular emphasis is the most indicative for the region.

“Uzbekistan is demonstrating today that competition for investors is moving into a different dimension. It is no longer enough to have resources, a market or a favorable geographic location. Investors are looking for predictability, a clear legal framework, mechanisms for capital protection and the ability to scale projects quickly. Therefore, the creation of a financial center, the development of the capital market, alternative financing instruments and independent dispute resolution mechanisms are not technical details, but part of the region's new investment architecture," says Alona Lebedieva.

An important practical outcome of the forum was the signing of a public-private partnership agreement for the construction and operation of a new international airport in Tashkent. The project will be implemented by an international consortium involving Vision Invest from Saudi Arabia, Sojitz Corporation from Japan, Incheon International Airport Corporation from South Korea and Uzbekistan Airports. Construction is scheduled for 2026–2030, and once commissioned, the airport is expected to serve up to 20 million passengers and 129,000 tonnes of cargo per year.

In Alona Lebedieva's view, projects of this kind show that Central Asia is moving from discussing investment potential to launching infrastructure solutions that are changing the economic role of the region.

"For investors, what matters is not only declarations, but also examples of projects where it is clear who finances, who builds, who manages and what obligations the state assumes. The new airport in Tashkent is not just a transport facility. It is part of a broader logic: if a country wants to be a regional hub for capital, production, logistics and trade, it must create physical and financial infrastructure simultaneously," she emphasizes.

Among the key topics of TIIF-2026 were critical minerals, green energy, artificial intelligence, logistics, industrial cooperation, agribusiness, Islamic finance and the development of regional infrastructure. Particular attention was paid to Central Asia's transport connectivity, including the Middle Corridor, the Trans-Afghan route and logistics projects designed to strengthen the region's role in trade between Asia and Europe.

The forum also demonstrated the growing role of international financial institutions: more than 370 representatives of development banks and financial organizations took part in it. Cooperation with American business and financial institutions became a separate area of focus. The forum recorded a record level of participation by representatives of companies from the United States, while the topics of negotiations included critical minerals, infrastructure, energy, artificial intelligence and digital technologies.

"Transport corridors are important, but the route itself on a map does not yet create investment attractiveness. What is needed is capacity, transparent customs procedures, stable tariffs, digital services, financing and common rules for several markets. It is precisely the combination of infrastructure, institutions and capital that can turn Central Asia from a transit space into an independent economic center," adds Alona Lebedieva.

The forum also confirmed the strengthening interest in high-tech sectors. TIIF-2026 included discussions on the development of artificial intelligence, data centers, digital infrastructure, geological exploration, aviation and satellite communications. This is important because

Uzbekistan is trying to position itself not only as a market with lower production costs or a transit advantage, but as a country capable of hosting complex capital-intensive projects – from infrastructure to the digital economy.

“Central Asia is gradually changing its role in the global economy. Previously, the region was often perceived mainly through the lens of raw materials or transit. Now it is beginning to form a broader offering: energy, critical materials, production, logistics, financial services and the digital economy. For investors, this means new opportunities, but for the countries of the region themselves, it means the need to very rapidly improve the quality of governance, regulation and international coordination,” concludes Alona Lebedieva.

Alona Lebedieva
Aurum Group
email us here
