India and Egypt, two of the world’s oldest civilizations, have enjoyed a history of close contact since ancient times. Ashoka’s edicts refer to his relations with Egypt under Ptolemy-II. In modern times, Mahatma Gandhi and Saad Zaghloul shared common goals on the independence of their countries, a relationship that was to blossom into an exceptionally close friendship between Gamal Abdel Nasser and Jawaharlal Nehru, leading to a Friendship Treaty between the two countries in 1955.

Political Relations

India and Egypt share close political understanding based on long history of contacts and cooperation on bilateral, regional and global issues. The joint announcement of establishment of diplomatic relations at Ambassadorial level was made on 18 August 1947. Both countries have cooperated on multilateral fora and were the founding members of Non-Aligned Movement. There is a new momentum in our relations and a shared desire to take it to a higher level.

After the new government led by President Sisi took over in June 2014, EAM Smt Sushma Swaraj paid a visit to Cairo in August 2015 and met President Sisi, Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry (and also met the Secretary General of League of Arab States. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi met President Sisi on the sidelines of UNGA, New York in September 2015. President Mukherjee and Prime Minister Modi met President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi during the 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit in New Delhi in October 2015. President Sisi paid a State visit to India in September 2016 accompanied by Mr. Sameh Shoukry, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Tarek Kabil, Minister of Trade and Industry and Mr. Amr El Garhy, Minister of Finance. A Joint Statement was issued outlining the three pillars of political-security cooperation, economic engagement & scientific collaboration and cultural & people-people ties as the basis of a new partnership for a new era.

There have been intensive engagement at the Ministerial level. Minister of Defence Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman visited Egypt in September 2018 and met her Egyptian counterpart. The Ministers decided to explore deeper cooperation in the fields of defence industry and R&D and joint production of defence equipment. MoS(EA) V. Muraleedharan met Eng. Sherif Ismail, Special Adviser to President and former prime Minister of Egypt on the sidelines of Democracy Day in Abuja in June 2019. EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar met FM Shoukry on the margins of UNGA, New York in September 2019. Supreme Court Justice Vineet Saran attended the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Supreme Constitutional Court of Egypt in October 2019. Minister of State (IC) for Civil Aviation, Housing and Urban Affairs and Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, Shri Hardeep Singh Puri visited Egypt in November 2019 and met with Minister of Trade & Industry of Egypt. MoS also
delivered the keynote address at the inaugural session of the “Regional Conclave on India - West Asia and North Africa (WANA)” organized by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

Recent Ministerial visits from Egypt to India include visits of Minister of Defence Sobhi in November 2017, Minister of Public Business Sector Ashraf El-Sharkawiy in November 2017, Foreign Minister Shoukry in March 2018 for India-Egypt JCM, Minister of State for Military Production, General Mohamed El Assar in April 2018 to attend DEFEXPO in Chennai, Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources, Eng Tarek-El Molla to attend 16th International Energy Forum in Delhi in April 2018 and Minister of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, Ezz el-Din Abu-Steit to attend COP14 UN Convention to combat desertification in September 2019. Air Vice Marshal Mohamed Abdel-Gaber Abdel-Latif Abdel-Qawy, Assistant Chief of Staff of the Egyptian Armed Forces for Air Force Affairs participated in AerolIndia-2019 at Bangalore in February 2019. A delegation of Egypt's National Security Council led by Secretary-General Ambassador Hatem Abdel Kader visited India from January 31 to February 3, 2019 and met Deputy National Security Adviser.

There are several mechanisms of bilateral institutional dialogue at different levels. The 11th round of Foreign Office Consultations was held in Delhi in December 2015. The 1st Joint Working Group on Cyber Issues was held in New Delhi in December 2016. The 4th Joint Committee Meeting on S&T was held in New Delhi in April 2017. The 2nd ISRO-NARSS Joint Working Group was held in Cairo in November 2017. The 2nd India-Egypt JWG on Counter Terrorism held in Cairo in January 2018. The India-Egypt Workshops on Agriculture-Biotechnology and Nanotechnology were held in Shillong in September 2018 and in Mumbai in January 2019, respectively. The 4th Joint Trade Committee was held in New Delhi in March 2019. The 1st Joint Working Group on Agriculture, Plant Quarantine and Animal Quarantine met on the sidelines of the 4th Joint Trade Committee in March 2019. Secretary, DOT, Government of India visited Egypt in April 2019 for bilateral meetings. A dialogue mechanism exists between the Indian Council of World Affairs(ICWA) and the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA). The latest round of dialogue between ICWA and ECFA took place in Cairo in September 2019. The 9th JDC was held in Cairo from 5-7 November, 2019.

**Economic Relations**

Egypt has been traditionally one of India’s most important trading partners in the African continent. The India-Egypt Bilateral Trade Agreement has been in operation since March 1978 and is based on the Most Favoured Nation clause and the bilateral trade has increased more than five times in last ten years. Starting from 2013-14 the trade volume gradually declined from US$ 4.95 billion to US$ 4.77 billion in 2014-15 and to US$ 3.23 billion in 2016-17, due to general economic slowdown and fall in oil prices. However, it showed positive growth in 2017-18 to reach the level of US$ 3.68 billion and further increased by 23% in 2018-19 to reach US$ 4.55 billion. During the period, India was
Egypt's 9th largest trading partner, 8th largest export destination and the 10th largest import source. During the period April – November 2019, the trade volume stood at US $3.17 billion (Imports to India – US$ 1.42 billion; Exports from India- US$ 1.75 billion). During this period, top three Indian exports were: petroleum products, meat and cotton yarn while the top three Indian imports were: crude petroleum, petroleum products and fertilizers.

Over 450 Indian companies are registered in Egypt, of which around 50 are active in various sectors with a combined investment exceeding US$ 3 billion. Approximately half are joint ventures or wholly owned Indian subsidiaries while the rest operate through their representative offices and execute projects for government organizations. Major Indian investments in Egypt include TCI Sanmar (with a value of US$ 1.5 billion), Alexandria Carbon Black, Kirloskar, Dabur India, Egypt-India Polyester Company (EIPET), SCIB Paints, Godrej, Mahindra and Monginis. Indian Pharmaceutical major Hetero Drugs Ltd launched a Joint Venture in May 2015 to produce a Hepatitis-C drug and Sun Pharma has recently commenced operations. Indian companies are present in a range of sectors like apparel, agriculture, chemicals, energy, automobiles, retail and others. Overall, these companies provide direct and indirect employment to approximately 35,000 Egyptians.

Indian companies have also executed projects in Egypt. L&T successfully completed Toshka 2 – Wadi Halfa 220 kV double circuit overhead transmission line project. The Overhead Transmission Line was successfully energized on 13 January 2020. Previously, L&T executed 500kV / 220 kV GIS substation projects for Egypt Electricity Transmission Co. in Ain Sokhna and Ras Ghareeb and 220kV overhead transmission line from Safaga to El-Qusair. These projects were worth a total of US$ 133.3 million. Sterling & Wilson built a cumulative capacity of 250 MW of Solar PV plants in 5 projects in Aswan in 2018-19, worth a total of US$ 250 million, in addition to a data center project worth US$ 3 million. Apart from this, the company has been awarded contract to connect renewable green energy to the main EETC Grid in a $28 million deal. Mahindra Susten, a part of Mahindra & Mahindra Group has recently been awarded a 200 MW solar PV project in Aswan.

Egyptian investments in India are to the tune of US$ 36.7 million which include ElSewedy Group (smart electrometers); KAPCI Coatings (car paints) and Modern Waterproofing Group/Bitumode (waterproofing membranes and protection boards for construction industry).

The grants-in-aid projects include Pan Africa Tele-medicine and Tele-education project in Alexandria University, Solar electrification project in Agaween village and Vocational Training Centre for textile technology in Shoubra, Cairo, which have been completed. An IT Centre in Al Azhar University is operational but yet to be formally inaugurated. As a part of 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and under ‘India for Humanity’ initiative, Jaipur Foot Artificial Limb Fitment Camp was organized at Assuit in May-June 2019. During the Camp, 550 artificial limbs were provided to 500 beneficiaries.
Technical cooperation and assistance has been a major part of our bilateral relationship. Since the year 2000, over 1000 Egyptian officials have benefited from ITEC and other programmes. During the year 2019-20, 110 ITEC scholarships were availed by Egyptian officials. 16 officials availed IAFS scholarships and 10 others traveled to India under the ICCR scholarship programme. 5 Egyptian students availed Hindi scholarships at Central Hindi Institute, Agra in 2018-19. Three diplomats from League of Arab States and one from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt attended the 67th Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats at FSI, New Delhi from 13 March -12 April 2019. FSI organized a special course for young Egyptian diplomats from 10- 22 June 2019, while Institute of Diplomatic Studies of Egypt has proposed to organize a similar course for young Indian diplomats in Cairo.

In the field of scientific cooperation, ICAR and the Agricultural Research Center of Egypt are working in the field of agricultural research and ‘Science & Technology’ cooperation is implemented through biennial Executive Programmes and Scientific Cooperation Programme between CSIR (India) and NRC (Egypt). MoU between National Sugar Institute (NSI) Kanpur (India) and Sugar Technology Research Institute (STRI) Assuit, Egypt was signed on November 2019 to provide framework for collaboration in research, development, training and exchange of experts in the field of sugarcane, sugar beet and sugar industry.

Egypt signed the ISA framework agreement as a founding member in March 2018 and ratified it in January 2019.

**Defence Relations**

Egypt and India enjoy cordial defence relations marked by mutual respect. The Chief of Staff of the Egyptian Air Force visited India in 2015, their Director of Military Intelligence visited in 2017, and Minister for Military Production in April 2018. Gen. Sedki Sobhi, Egyptian Defence Minister along with other delegation members visited India from 12 -16 November 2017. RM visited Egypt from 20-22 September 2018. During her meeting with Egyptian Defence Minister, both sides agreed to enhance cooperation in three areas; maritime time cooperation, training cooperation, and Defence production. In December 2019, Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria visited Egypt and met Air Marshal Mohamed Abbas Helmy, Commander-in-Chief, Egypt Air Force. A two-member Egyptian delegation consisting of Chief of Staff, Egyptian Naval Forces Rear Admiral Ashraf Ibrahim Atwa Megahed, and Chief of Egyptian Air Force Armament Authority, Air Vice Marshal Mohamed Hamed Mohamed Abouelazm visited India to attend DEFEXPO INDIA 2020 in Lucknow from 5-8 February 2020.

Most of the current defence cooperation is determined by Joint Defence Committee (JDC) activities. Starting in 2006, nine JDC meetings have been held alternately in either country, followed by exchange activities. Roughly 10 activities are planned in a year from either side. DSSC and NDC courses are offered on a regular basis. Delegations from NDC, War
Colleges and CDM undertake study tours on a regular basis to Egypt. Egypt participated in the Multinational Training Exercise for friendly African countries at Pune from 18-27 March 2019 with a contingent of 10 members. The Egyptian Navy participates in the Indian Navy’s Admiral Cup every year. Indian Navy Ships undertake port calls at Egyptian ports. INS Tarkash made a port call at Alexandria from 28 June- 1 July 2019 and participated in PASSEX with the Egyptian Navy upon departure. Egypt provides transit facilities to IAF and IN aircraft ferrying to and from Russia, Europe and the USA. Egyptian Armed Forces organised their first Tri-Services Defence Exhibition (EDEX-2018) in Cairo from 3-5 December 2018. A combined pavilion was set up by Indian DPSUs including DRDO, OFB, BEL, MDL, HAL and BDL. Additionally some private Indian firms also participated in separate pavilions. A senior Egyptian military officer attended Aero India 2019 at Bangalore from 19-22 February 2019.

Cultural Relations

The Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture (MACIC) has been promoting cultural cooperation between the two countries, through regular activities such as Hindi, Urdu and Yoga classes; seminars; film shows; exhibitions and participation in local cultural activities.

‘Sawtul-Hind’, Embassy’s flagship Arabic magazine for the past six decades, reached a milestone in July 2017 with the publishing of its 500th edition. Yoga has gained immense popularity in Egypt and the International Day of Yoga 2019 was celebrated with enthusiasm in Cairo, Ismailia and Al-Minya.

Three streets in Cairo are named after Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru and Dr. Zakir Hussein. There are three busts of Mahatma Gandhi in Egypt– one at the Supreme Council of Culture, Cairo, one at Al-Horreya Park, Zamalek and one in Alexandria at the Bibliotheca Alexandria. The bronze bust at Al-Horreya Park was unveiled on 6 November 2019 by Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of State (IC) for Civil Aviation, Housing and Urban Affairs and Minister of State for Commerce and Industry to mark the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

MACIC organizes India Day(s) in Egyptian governorates and universities on a regular basis as well as “Glimpses of India” painting competition for Egyptian children for the last 25 years. In 2019, a record number of 16,000 school children participated in it. Tagore Festival was held for the third consecutive year in 2018 celebrating 156th birth Anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore. 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi was also celebrated by organizing commemorative events on 02 October 2018. An event to mark 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and International Day of Non-violence was organized in collaboration with the League of Arab States (LAS) on 2 October 2019 at LAS Headquarters which featured a seminar and photo exhibition. On 6 November 2019, a commemorative stamp on Mahatma Gandhi was released by Egypt Post. The 7th edition of India by the Nile, the annual Indian cultural festival, was held from 5-17 March 2018 in
three cities in Egypt – Cairo, Alexandria, and Port Said. A MoU to establish the first ICCR Chair was signed with the Ain Shams University in March 2016 and commenced in September 2016.

Indian Community

At present, the Indian community in Egypt numbers at around 4200, most of whom are concentrated in Cairo. There are also a small number of families in Alexandria, Port Said and Ismailia. A majority of the Indians are either employed with Indian companies or are professionals with various multinationals. The Mission provides assistance to the Indian Community Association in Egypt (ICAE) and works closely with members of the community. About 290 Indian students are studying in Egypt, mainly in Al Azhar University, and a few in Ain Shams and Cairo Universities. Ten Egyptian universities were recently included in the list of approved Foreign Medical Institutions/ Universities for MBBS or equivalent course by Medical Council of India (MCI).

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10 February 2020