India and Egypt, two of the world’s oldest civilizations, have enjoyed a history of close contact from ancient times. Even prior to the Common Era, 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. The Non-Aligned Movement, led by Nehru and Nasser, was a natural concomitant of this relationship.

High Level Visits

Since the 1980s, there have been four Prime Ministerial visits from India to Egypt: Shri Rajiv Gandhi (1985); Shri P. V. Narasimha Rao (1995); Shri I. K. Gujral (1997); and Dr Manmohan Singh (2009). Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh participated in the XV NAM Summit held in Sharm El-Sheikh in July 2009.

From the Egyptian side, the President visited India in 1982, in 1983 (NAM Summit) and again in November 2008, during which a number of agreements on cooperation in health, medicine, outer space, and trade were signed. High level exchanges with Egypt have continued after the 2011 Egyptian Revolution and President Mohamed Morsy visited India in March 2013. During the visit, six MoUs and two Letters of Intent in the fields of IT, cyber security, micro and small enterprises, cultural heritage, and solar energy were signed. In addition, India is assisting in the upgradation of a vocational training facility in Cairo, as well as in the establishment of a Centre for IT excellence in Al Azhar University. Since January 2011, nine Ministerial visits between India and Egypt have also taken place, including the visit of the External Affairs Minister (EAM) of India to Cairo in March 2012.

Trade Relations: Exim Figures

Egypt has traditionally been 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. Bilateral trade has grown significantly and consistently in the past five years. Trade between India and Egypt during the last financial year (April 2012- March 2013) was US $ 5.48 billion. During this period, India was Egypt’s second largest destination for its exports. Since FY 2006-07, India has been among the top five importers of Egyptian products. The top five Egyptian exports to India are Crude oil and LNG, Rock phosphates, Cotton, oilseeds and fruits.
Indian exports to Egypt during the last financial year was US$ 2.9. The top five Indian exports during 2012-13 were mineral fuel, cuts of boneless bovine frozen meat, Electrical machinery and parts, cotton and two wheelers motorcycles.

**Trade Relations: Commercial Presence**

Out of the 50 Indian companies operating in Egypt with a combined investment of roughly US $ 2.5 billion, approximately 25 companies are joint ventures and wholly owned Indian subsidiaries. The rest of the Indian companies operate in Egypt through their representative offices and execute various projects for Governmental organizations. Major Indian investments in Egypt include TCI Sanmar, Alexandria Carbon Black, the Alexandria Fibre Co., Dabur India's production facility for its cosmetics line, Egypt-India Polyester Company (EIPET) for manufacture of PET Resin, SCIB Paints, etc. The Oberoi Group manages a hotel and runs Nile cruises; Kirloskar Brothers sells diesel engines and irrigation pump sets in Egypt; Ashok Leyland, Tata Motors, Maruti Suzuki and Mahindra & Mahindra market their vehicles in Egypt, and Bajaj Auto dominates the three-wheelers market. Indian Public Sector Undertakings like Gas Authority of India Ltd, ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL)., Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation (GSPC) also have a presence in Egypt, as does the State Bank of India. Indian companies also execute projects in railway signaling, pollution control including air pollution equipment, water treatment, irrigation, anti-collision devices etc.

As is evident from the companies listed above, there is a significant Indian presence in almost every field. In the process, these companies provide direct and indirect employment to approximately 35,000 Egyptians. The top 5 Indian companies alone, mainly in the labour intensive textile industry, provide direct employment to more than 12,800 Egyptians.

**Technical and Scientific Cooperation**

Technical cooperation and assistance has been a major part of the bilateral relationship. Since the year 2000, over 350 Egyptian candidates have visited India under ITEC Programmes. During the year 2012-13, 39 Egyptian candidates attended ITEC trainings. 16 Egyptian diplomats have also attended courses conducted by the Foreign Service Institute of India. In the field of scientific cooperation, ICAR and the Agricultural Research Center of the Ministry of Agriculture & Land of Egypt signed a MoU for cooperation in the field of agricultural research in March 1998. An Agreement on cooperation in science and technology was also signed in October 1995. Cooperation in agriculture and S& T is implemented through biennial Executive Programmes.
Pan Africa e-Network Project

The Pan Africa e-Network Project, one of the flagship programmes of the Indian Government to strengthen ties with Africa, has been operational through an E-learning Centre since July 2009 at Alexandria University. Presently, 15 Egyptian students are taking MBA courses and 45 Masters in IT with two prestigious Indian Universities. The Tele-medicine Centre under the Project also became operational in November 2009 at the Centre for Women’s Health and Development in Alexandria. The programme offers online medical consultation in various medical disciplines. The Alexandria University will soon be ready to serve as regional centre for the entire North African region both for e-learning and tele-medicine.

Cultural Links

The Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture (MACIC) was set up in Cairo in 1992 to promote cultural cooperation between the two countries, through the implementation of the Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP). The Centre, in addition to popularizing Indian culture through Hindi, Urdu and Yoga classes and the screening of movies, also organizes cultural festivals. During the months of April-May 2013, a grand 'India by the Nile' festival was organized in Cairo and Alexandria with top Indian artists and performers. The festival, that opened with a Bollywood dance and music at the Cairo Opera House included performances from Shubha Mudgal, a dance troupe from Nrityagram, and a symposium of writers, in addition to a food festival, a film panorama, and an exhibition of calligraphy curated by Jaya Jaitley. Earlier, In March 2012, a portrait of Tagore was unveiled at the House of Poetry by the EAM and the Egyptian Minister of Culture. During the visit, a new CEP was also signed. MACIC itself has undergone renovation, with a new library and language classroom opening in January 2012. Over 100 Egyptian students have availed of ICCR Scholarships in leading Universities in India.

The strong ties between India and Egypt are evident from the affection towards India amongst the population. Three streets in Cairo are named after Indian leaders namely, Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru and Dr. Zakir Hussein. Egypt Air operates three flights a week on the Cairo-Mumbai-Kuala Lumpur sector, but no Indian carrier flies this sector. The Indian Community is about 3000 strong, concentrated in Cairo although a small number of families reside in Alexandria and Port Said. The Indian Community Association of Egypt (ICAE) coordinates activities of the Indian Diaspora. Approximately 85,000 Indian tourists visited Egypt in 2012.
Important Bilateral Treaties and Agreements include

- Agreement on the establishment of the Joint Commission (1983)
- Agreement on combating international terrorism and trans-national and organized Crime (1995)
- Agreement on Tourism Cooperation (1997)
- Extradition Treaty (2008)
- MoU on Trade and Technical Cooperation (2008)
- MoU on Renewable Energy Cooperation (2011)
- MoU on Cooperation in the field of Environmental Protection (2012)
- MoU on Cooperation in the field of Electoral Management and Administration (2012)
- MoU on Cooperation in Information and Communication Technology (2013)
- MoU on the establishment of a Centre for Excellence in IT (2013)
- MoU on Cooperation in the field of Micro and Small Enterprises (2013)
- MoU on Cooperation in the field of Protection, Preservation and Management of Cultural Heritage (2013)
- MoU on Upgradation of a vocational Training Centre in Cairo (2013)
- Letter of Intent on cooperation in the field of solar energy (2013)
- Letter of Intent to Launch Egyptian nano-satellite (2013)

*****

July 2013