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 was a natural concomitant of this relationship.

Political Relations

India and Egypt share close political understanding based on long history of contacts and cooperation on bilateral, regional and global issues. There is a new momentum in our relations and a shared desire to take it to a higher level. 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, NAM Summit). From the Egyptian side, President Hosni Mubarak visited India in 1982, in 1983 (NAM Summit) and again in 2008. High level exchanges with Egypt continued after the 2011 Egyptian Revolution and President Mohamed Morsy visited India in March 2013. EAM visited Cairo in March 2012 and in August 2015, and the Egyptian Foreign Minister visited India in December 2013.

The year 2015 has seen more intense political cooperation between two countries with regular interactions at leadership and Ministerial level. PM Shri Narendra Modi met President Sisi on the sidelines of UNGA, New York in September 2015. Their talks focussed on counter terrorism, deepening economic engagement, and regional issues. PM Modi and President Mukherjee met President Sisi during the Third India-Africa Forum Summit in New Delhi in October 2015.

2015 also saw, five Ministerial level visits from India to Egypt; which included Shri Prakash Javadekar who participated in the 15th African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) in March 2015; Special Envoy of PM, Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi met President Sisi in July 2015; Shipping Minister Shri Nitin Gadkari, represented India at the opening of the new Suez Canal in August 2015 and met President Sisi; and EAM Smt. Sushma Swaraj visited Cairo and met President Sisi, Foreign Minister and Secretary General of League of Arab States in August 2015 (two MoUs on Tourism and Science and Technology cooperation were signed during the visit); Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqi, Minister of State for Parliamentary and Minority Affairs participated in the 25th International Conference of Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs at Luxor, Egypt in November 2015.

Deputy National Security Advisor Dr. Arvind Gupta visited Egypt in July 2015 and held talks with his Egyptian counterpart. Egyptian NSA Ms. Faiza Abou el-Naga met NSA and Defence Secretary at New Delhi in December 2015 and a MoU on cooperation between the Secretariats of NSCs of both countries was signed during the meeting. The 11th round of Foreign Office Consultations was held at Delhi in December 2015.

Economic Relations

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. The total bilateral trade increased almost 60% from US$ 3 billion in 2009-10 to US$ 4.89 billion in 2014-15. India is the sixth largest trading partner of Egypt – the third largest export destination and eleventh largest import source for Egypt. India’s imports from Egypt were worth US$ 1.89 billion
during FY 2014-15. Indian exports to Egypt during FY 2014-15 have been recorded at US$ 3 billion. The top five Indian exports during FY 2014-15 were mineral fuels, meat, vehicles and parts, cotton yarn and organic chemicals, while the top five Indian imports were crude petroleum, rock phosphate, inorganic chemicals, cotton and fruits.

50 Indian companies are operating in Egypt with a combined investment of almost US$ 3 billion. Approximately half are joint ventures or wholly owned Indian subsidiaries, the rest operate through their representative offices and execute projects for Government organizations. Major Indian investments in Egypt include TCI Sanmar (around US$ 1.2 billion), Alexandria Carbon Black, Dabur India, Egypt-India Polyester Company (EIPET) and SCIB Paints. Indian companies also execute projects in railway signalling, pollution control, water treatment, irrigation, anti-collision devices etc. Indian Pharmaceutical major Hetero Drugs Ltd launched a JV in May 2015 to produce a drug used in the treatment Hepatitis-C which was highly appreciated by the Egyptian government. Indian companies are present in apparel, agriculture, chemicals, energy, automobiles, retail and others. Overall, these companies provide direct and indirect employment to approximately 35,000 Egyptians.

Egyptian investments in India include ElSewedy Electrometer (US$ 30 million in Noida); KAPCI car paints (US$ 20 million in Karnataka); and Bitumode Waterproofing (US$ 3 million in Dahej).

At present, India does not provide any LOCs to Egypt. The grants-in-aid projects include: solar electrification in Agaween village; Vocational Training Centre for textile technology in Shoubra, Cairo; and Pan Africa Tele-medicine and Tele-education project in Alexandria University.

Technical cooperation and assistance has been a major part of our bilateral relationship. In 2014-15, 124 Egyptians were selected to undergo various training programmes in India under ITEC and other programmes. 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.

**Cultural Relations**

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, Yoga and meditation classes, dance classes, seminars, and exhibitions, also organizes cultural festivals.

The ‘India by the Nile’ (IBN) annual cultural festival has emerged as the largest foreign festival in Egypt. IBN 2015 was inaugurated by Amitabh Bachchan and included Manipuri folk dance, crafts exhibition, Yoga and Ayurveda, Bollywood musical, Indian fusion music, street food festival, screening of films, a writers’ workshop and a number of other events conceived and organized on the principle of public-private partnership.

Indian cultural groups have also participated at the International Festival for Drums and Traditional Arts, Samaa International Festival for Chanting and Spiritual Music, and International Festival for Art and Culture. In its outreach activities, the Indian Cultural Centre also organizes India Day(s) in Egyptian governorates and universities. Yoga has gained popularity in Egypt with 14 schools in Cairo, besides centres in other cities. The International Day of Yoga was celebrated with enthusiasm. There is also a growing interest in traditional medicine.
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. There are two busts of Mahatma Gandhi – one in Cairo at the Supreme Council of Culture and the other one in Alexandria at the Bibliotheca Alexandria.

Indian Community

At present, the Indian community in Egypt numbers at around 3600, 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.

Important Bilateral Treaties and Agreements include

- Treaty of Friendship (1955)
- Trade Agreement (1978)
- Agreement on 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 Up-gradation of a vocational Training Centre in Cairo (2013)
- Letter of Intent on cooperation in the field of solar energy (2013)
- Letter of Intent concerning launch services for Egyptian Nano Satellite on board Indian PSLV (2013)
- MOU between the GOI & Government of Arab Republic of Egypt for Air Transport Arrangements (Aug 2014)
- Executive Programme on Science & Technology cooperation for the period of 2015-2018 (Dec 2014)
- MOU on scientific cooperation between National Research Centre, Egypt (NRC) and Council for Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) [August 2015]
- MOU on Tourism cooperation (August 2015)
- MOU on cooperation between Secretaries of National Security Councils of India and Egypt (December 2015)
Useful Resources:

Embassy of India, Cairo website:  
www.indembcairo.com
Embassy of India, Cairo Facebook Page:  
https://www.facebook.com/IndiaInEgypt?fref=ts
Embassy of India, Cairo Twitter account:  
https://twitter.com/indembcairo
Embassy of India, Cairo YouTube Channel:  
https://www.youtube.com/user/IndianEmbassyCairo

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