

India - Egypt Relations

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 Hosni Mubarak 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 Letter of Intents 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 up-gradation 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, ten 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, and the Egyptian Foreign Minister to India in December 2013.

Trade Relations:

Export-Import

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. Trade between India and Egypt during the last financial year (April 2014 - March 2015) has been recorded at US\$4.76 billion. Most importantly, India is the sixth largest trading partner of Egypt - the **second** largest export destination and tenth largest import source for Egypt. India's imports from Egypt were worth US\$ 1.74 billion during FY 2014-15. It is significant to note that there has been diversification in the export basket of Egyptian products to India.

Indian exports to Egypt during FY 2014-15 have been recorded at US\$ 3.02 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.

Commercial Presence:

Out of the 50 Indian companies operating in Egypt with a combined investment of almost US\$ 3 billion, approximately half 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, Dabur India, Egypt-India Polyester Company (EIPET) and SCIB Paints. Indian companies also execute projects in railway signaling, pollution control including air pollution equipment, 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. Overall, these companies provide direct and indirect employment to approximately 35,000 Egyptians. The top five 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. In 2014-15, 124 Egyptians have been selected to undergo various training programmes in India [out of this, 110 were under ITEC programme (Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation) and 11 under C.V. Raman Fellowship program and three under IAFS (India Africa Forum Summit program)]. 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 Science & Technology 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. Till December 2014, 45 Egyptian students got MBA, 45 students got Masters IT degree, 28 students got Diploma in Business Administration and 15 students got IT diplomas from three 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 Alexandria University will soon be ready to serve as regional centre for the entire North Africa 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, Yoga and meditation classes, occasional dance classes, seminars, exhibitions and also organizes cultural festivals.

The third edition of the 'India by the Nile' (IBN) annual India cultural held in Egypt from 29 March to 17 April 2015. IBN was inaugurated by Shri Amitabh Bachchan at India House. The three-week long festival included Manipuri folk dance, crafts exhibition and symposium, wellbeing experience to highlight the importance of yoga and Ayurveda, Bollywood Musical, Indian fusion band, street food festival, retrospective of Amitabh Bachchan films, 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 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 other 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 medicines.

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 Mahatma Gandhi – one in Cairo at the Supreme Council of Culture and the other one in Alexandria at the Bibliotheca Alexandria.

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)
- The Partnership Agreement (2006)
- Extradition Treaty (2008)
- MoU on Trade and Technical Cooperation (2008)
- MoU on Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for Peaceful Purposes (2008)
- MoU on Cooperation in field of Health and Medicine (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 Cooperation in Cyber Security (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)

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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