India-Egypt Relations

India and Egypt, two of the world's oldest civilizations, have enjoyed a history of close contact from 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. The Non-Aligned Movement was a natural concomitant of this relationship. In the 21st century PM Modi and President Sisi have fashioned the architecture for a New Partnership in the New Era.

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. 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 Morsi visited India in March 2013. EAM visited Cairo in March 2012 and the Egyptian Foreign Minister visited India in December 2013.

After the new government led by President Sisi took over in June 2014, EAM paid a visit to Cairo in August 2015. 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 Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi during the Third 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 bilateral partnership.

2015 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; 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 Naqvi, 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. Dr. Shawki Alam, Grand Mufti of

Egypt participated in the World Sufi Forum, New Delhi, March 2016. Mr. Sugato Bose, MP, visited Egypt in May 2016.

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. The 6th Joint Defence Committee met in New Delhi in April 2016. The first Joint Working Group on Cyber Issues was held in New Delhi in December 2016.

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. The bilateral trade volume between the two countries had shown consecutive positive growth from 2005-06 to 2012-13, taking the trade from US$ 1.2 billion to its peak of US$ 5.45 billion. However, starting from 2013-14 the trade volume has 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. India is Egypt's 11th largest trade partner; 10th largest export destination and also the 10th largest import source for Egypt. India's imports from Egypt were worth of US$ 1.2 billion during FY 2016-17. India exports to Egypt during FY 2016-17 recorded US$ 2 billion. The top five Indian exports during this period were; Meat, Cotton Yarn, Petroleum Oil and Motor Cars while the top five Indian imports were; Petroleum, Natural Calcium Phosphates, Raw Cotton, Mineral or Chemical Fertilizers and Citrus.

Over 450 Indian companies are operating in Egypt of which around 50 are in manufacturing and construction 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 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 Hepatitis-C drug and Sun Pharma has recently commenced operations. Indian companies are present in almost every sector including 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 (invested $ 30m in the first phase and has plans to further invest US $ 150 million in the second phase in Noida); KAPCI car paints (US$ 20 million in Karnataka); and Bitumode Waterproofing (US$ 3 million in Dahej).

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 all been completed and IT Centre in Al Azhar University which is under

implementation. At present, there is no LoC project in Egypt, while discussions are ongoing with several Ministries.

Technical cooperation and assistance has been a major part of our bilateral relationship. Since the year 2000, over 800 Egyptian officials have benefited from ITEC programmes. In the year 2014-2015 & 2015-2016 alone, 210 Egyptians underwent training conducted under a number of programmes including ITEC, India-Africa Forum Summit and CV Raman Fellowship. So far, 16 Egyptian diplomats have attended PCFD at FSI and 46 Egyptian scholars and scientists have been benefited from CV Raman International Fellowship for African Researchers. In 2015-16, 110 slots have been allotted to Egypt by MEA under ITEC. In 2016-17, 200 slots have been allotted to Egypt after a request for an increase, and the same has been allotted for 2017-18. 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 classes, dance classes, seminars, film shows and exhibitions, also organizes cultural festivals.

India by the Nile 2017, the annual Indian cultural festival, was held from 8 March to 27 April 2017 for over six weeks in five cities in Egypt – Cairo, Giza, Alexandria, Ismailia, and Port Said. The Festival is produced on public private partnership. The festival is billed as the 'biggest foreign cultural festival' in Egypt. An India-Egypt Friendship Cup football match series for Under-16 teams was held in Egypt, for the first time, as part of 'India at 70' celebrations.

The Indian Cultural Centre has initiated the MACIC Roundtable-Monthly Seminar series in July 2016, to involve youth, academia, culture lovers, civil society, in stimulating discussions on issues of mutual interest and sharing of experiences. The MACIC Film Club regularly screens and hosts panel discussions on Indian movies, including from Bollywood.

'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, depicting the strong bond and vibrant cultural exchanges between the two countries. Sawtul-Hind, whose first edition was published in 1952, continues to be an interface between India and Egypt and the Arab world at large.

In its outreach activities, the Indian Cultural Centre also organizes India Day(s) in Egyptian governorates and universities on a regular basis. MACIC has been organizing the Glimpses of India painting competition for Egyptian children for the last 22 years. An overwhelming response was received in the 2016 edition of the painting competition with an unprecedented participation of 10,100 schoolchildren from 1092 schools. The competition was held simultaneously in eight Governorates in Egypt for the first time. As part of the 155th Birth Anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore, a week-long celebration was held in Cairo. The Mission also commemorated the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi in October 2016 in Cairo and Port Said (the

only city Gandhi visited in Egypt). In March 2012, a portrait of Tagore was unveiled at the House of Poetry by the EAM and the Egyptian Minister of Culture.

Indian cultural groups have also participated at the International Festival for Drums and Traditional Arts, Samaa International Festival for Chanting and Spiritual Music, and Aswan International Festival for Cultural Arts. India was the Guest of Honour country at the International Drums Festival 2016. India was also the Guest of Honour country at the Summer Festival at Bibliotheca Alexandrina.

A MoU to establish the first ICCR Chair was signed with the Ain Shams University in March 2016 and commenced in September 2016. The Indian Chair was established in the Bioinformatics section headed by an eminent Indian professor.

Yoga has gained popularity in Egypt with more than 50 schools in Cairo, besides centers in other cities. The International Day of Yoga 2017 was celebrated with enthusiasm in Cairo, Ismailia and Alexandria. 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 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)
- 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)
- MoU between Bureau of Indian Standard(BIS) and Egyptian Organization for Standardization and Quality(EOS)(January 2016)
- Agreement on Maritime Transport (September 2016)

Useful resources

For more information and latest updates please visit:

(a) Embassy of India, Cairo website: www.indembcairo.com
(b) India in Egypt Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/IndiaInEgypt?fref=ts
(c) Embassy of India, Cairo Twitter account: https://twitter.com/indembcairo
(d) Embassy of India, Cairo YouTube Channel: https://www.youtube.com/user/IndianEmbassyCairo
(e) Sawtul Hind Magazine Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Sawtul-Hind-Magazine-
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