

India-Egypt relations: PM's Egypt Visit

Why in news?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's historic two day state visit to Egypt renewed India ties with Egypt.

What is the history of India-Egypt relations?

- **Historical** - The history of contacts between [India and Egypt](#), two of the world's oldest civilisations, can be traced back to at least the time of Emperor Asoka.
- **Geostrategic** - Egypt, the most populous country in West Asia, occupies a crucial geo-strategic location — **12%** of global trade passes through the **Suez Canal**.
- It is a major market for India and can act as a gateway to both Europe and Africa.
- **Political** - The joint announcement of the establishment of diplomatic relations at the Ambassadorial level was made in 1947.
- India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Egypt's President Gamal Abdel Nasser signed the **friendship treaty in 1955** and they were key to form the **NAM in 1961**.
- New Delhi views Egypt as a moderate Islamic voice, which has made an attempt to play a positive role in the 57-member **Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)**.
- **Economic** - The India-Egypt bilateral trade agreement has been in operation since 1978 and is based on the **most-favoured nation** clause.
- The bilateral trade has increased more than five times in the past 10 years.
- Agriculture will be a key area of cooperation as Egypt is facing a shortage of food grains due to Ukraine Russia war.

EGYPT MAP



How significant is the Egypt visit?

- Prime Minister's visit to Egypt marks a significant moment in bilateral relations.
- It is the first visit to Egypt by an Indian Prime Minister since 1997.
- The state visit elevated the Egypt-India relationship to a strategic partnership.
- Egypt's rising stature in Africa and the strategic importance of the Suez Canal further enhance its role in global geopolitics and trade.
- Thus it is a significant move for India's ties with the West Asia-North Africa (WANA) region.

What happened during the visit?

- Prime Minister was conferred with the '*Order of the Nile*', Egypt's highest honour, by President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi at Cairo.
- Four agreements were signed between India and Egypt during the visit.
- The *strategic partnership* between India and Egypt for clean energy.
- Three Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) were also signed in the fields of agriculture, archaeology and antiquities, and competition law.
- Lately, '*India Unit*' was newly formed in the Egyptian Cabinet to act as a tool in steering bilateral collaborations.
- He visited the Al-Hakim Mosque and met with Egypt's Grand Mufti.

President of Egypt, H.E. Mr. Abdel Fattah El-Sisi visited India as Chief Guest for Republic Day 2023

How has the relationship transformed over the years?

- Their positions on the Ukraine war have been extremely similar, both India and Egypt calling for a diplomatic resolution.
- India supplied wheat to Egypt that was hit by the blockade on exports from Russia and Ukraine last year, before the Black Sea Grain Initiative stepped in.
- **Pillars of ties** - The India-Egypt strategic partnership is to be built on 4 pillars that have formed the core of the relationship -
 - Politics, defence and security
 - Economic engagement
 - Academic and scientific exchanges
 - Cultural and people-to-people contacts

Egypt is a “guest country” at the upcoming G-20 summit to be held in September 2023.

- The Egypt-India partnership holds tremendous regional and global significance and enables India to fortify its economic ties, extend its global reach, and safeguard its maritime interests.
- **Regional** - It strengthens India’s foothold in Africa.
- **Global** - India can build on Egypt’s expanding presence in Africa and elevate its own position on the global stage.
- **Defence** - Egypt’s pursuit of a self-reliant defence industry aligns with India’s defence capabilities.
- Egypt’s interest in acquiring the Tejas LCA Mk-1A aircraft from India opens avenues for collaboration in the aviation sector.
- Egypt could serve as a pivotal gateway for India to expand its defence capabilities and access significant markets with its network of defence alliances with African nations.
- **Economic** - The Suez Canal holds paramount significance for India’s trade, connectivity, and maritime security prospects.
- Egypt is positioned as the second largest economy in Africa after Nigeria.
- Strategic ties with Egypt will open India’s access to Africa markets under the umbrella of the African Continental Free Trade Area.
- **Connectivity** - Establishing Indian industrial zones in the strategic Suez Canal region would facilitate seamless connectivity.
- The Industrial Zone will enable India to bring its manufacturing capabilities to Africa’s expanding markets.
- **Clean Energy** - The green and renewable collaboration will be an important part of India’s future partnership with Egypt.

References

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