



## India-Egypt Relations

**For Prelims:** Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Republic Day

**For Mains:** Relationship Between India and Egypt

### Why in News?

Recently, on the occasion of the **74<sup>th</sup> Republic Day**, the **President of Egypt was invited as the chief guest at the parade**, this is the first time that an Egyptian President has been accorded this honour.

- **A military contingent from Egypt also participated in the parade.**

**Note:** An invitation to be **Chief Guest is an important honour that is very high on symbolism**. New Delhi's choice of Chief Guest every year is **dictated by a number of reasons — strategic and diplomatic, business interest, and geopolitics.**



## What is the Status of the India-Egypt Relationship?

### ▪ History:

- The history of contact between India and Egypt, two of the world's oldest civilisations, **can be traced back to at least the time of [Emperor Ashoka](#)**.
  - Ashoka's edicts refer to his relations with Egypt under Ptolemy-II.
- In modern times, **[Mahatma Gandhi](#) and the Egyptian revolutionary Saad Zaghloul shared the common goal of [independence](#) from British colonial rule**.
  - The joint announcement of establishment of diplomatic relations at Ambassadorial level was made on 18 August 1947.
- India and Egypt **signed a friendship treaty in 1955**. In 1961, India and Egypt along with Yugoslavia, Indonesia and Ghana **established the [Non-Aligned Movement \(NAM\)](#)**.
- In 2016, the **joint statement between India and Egypt** identified political-security cooperation, economic engagement and scientific collaboration, and cultural and people-people ties **as the basis of a new partnership for a new era**.

### ▪ Recent Scenario:

- During this year's meeting, both India and Egypt **agreed to elevate the bilateral relationship to a "strategic partnership"**.
  - The strategic partnership will have **broadly four elements**: political, defence, and security; economic engagement; scientific and academic collaboration; cultural and people-to-people contacts.
- India and Egypt **signed a [Memorandum of Understanding \(MoU\)](#) for three years to facilitate content exchange, capacity building, and co-productions between [Prasar Bharati](#) and the National Media Authority of Egypt**.
  - Under the pact, **both broadcasters will exchange their programmes of different genres** like sports, news, culture, entertainment on bilateral basis.

### ▪ A Partner within the OIC:

- India **views Egypt as a moderate Islamic voice among Muslim-majority countries, and as a partner within the [Organization for Islamic Cooperation \(OIC\)](#)**.

### ▪ Terrorism & Defence:

- During this Republic Day meeting, India and Egypt **expressed concerns about the spread of terrorism** around the world as it is the most serious security threat to humanity. Consequently, **the two countries agreed that concerted action is necessary to end [cross-border terrorism](#)**.
- The two countries are **looking at deepening defence and security cooperation**. Moreover, the two **Air Forces collaborated on the development of fighter aircraft in the 1960s**, and Indian pilots trained their Egyptian counterparts from the 1960s until the mid-1980s.
  - Both the **[Indian Air Force \(IAF\)](#) and Egyptian air force fly the [French Rafale fighter jets](#)**.
- In 2022, a **pact was signed between the two countries** that have decided to also participate in exercises and cooperate in training.
- The first joint special forces exercise between **the Indian Army and the Egyptian Army, "Exercise Cyclone-I"** has been underway since 14 January 2023 in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan.

### ▪ Cultural Relations:

- The **Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture (MACIC)** was established in Cairo in 1992. The centre has been promoting cultural cooperation between the two countries.

### ▪ Difficult Time for Egypt:

- Egypt's economy has been in chaos over the past few years due to the pandemic and the **[Russia-Ukraine war](#) which impacted its supply of food as almost 80% of Egypt's grain** imported from Russia and Ukraine **and impacted Egypt's [foreign exchange reserves](#)**.
  - In 2022, **despite [restrictions on the export of wheat](#), India allowed shipments of 61,500 metric tonnes to Egypt**.
- **From India, Egypt is seeking investments in infrastructure** including Metro projects, a **[Suez Canal](#) economic zone**, a second channel of the Suez Canal, and a new administrative capital in Egypt.
  - **More than 50 Indian companies** have invested more than USD 3.15 billion in Egypt.

▪ **Geo-Strategic Concerns:**

- China's bilateral trade with Egypt is currently at USD 15 billion, **double that of India's USD 7.26 billion in 2021-22**. During the past eight years, the President of Egypt has **traveled to China seven times to lure Chinese investments**.
- Egypt, the most populous country in West Asia, **occupies a crucial geo-strategic location** — 12% of global trade passes through the Suez Canal and **is a key player in the region**.
  - It is a **major market for India and can act as a gateway to both [Europe](#) and [Africa](#)**. However, it also has bilateral trade pacts with important West Asian and African nations which is a cause of concern for India.

**UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)**

**Q.** What were the events that led to the Suez Crisis in 1956? How did it deal a final blow to Britain's self-image as a world power? **(2014)**

**Source: IE**

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