



भारत का राजदूतावास, काहिरा  
Embassy of India, Cairo  
Economic and Commercial Report: April 2019

## Overview

- IMF expects Egypt's debt to decline to 74% of GDP by 2022/2023
- Egypt's economic growth hits 5.5%, highest in Decade
- Delegation led by Ms. Aruna Sundararajan, Secretary, Department of Telecommunications visited Egypt
- Pharmexcil delegation comprising 26 Indian companies participated in Pharmaconex 2019 Exhibition held at Cairo
- President Sisi attended China's second Belt and Road Forum. New partnership agreements that include a contract to jointly manufacture electric cars were signed during the visit.
- Egypt's oil trade balance achieved surplus of \$150.8m since 4 years
- Egypt to host 26th WEF 2020
- Egypt to amend public enterprise law in second half of 2019: Minister

## Macro-economy and Economic Policy

- **Egypt's foreign currency reserves hit \$44.1 bln by the end of March: CBE**

Egypt's foreign currency reserves jumped by \$52 million by the end of March to \$44.11 billion, according to the Central Bank of Egypt (CBE). By the end of February, the country's foreign reserves registered \$44.06 billion, compared to \$42.6 billion in January.

Egyptian finance minister Mohamed Maait had announced that Egypt received the fifth tranche worth \$2 billion of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) \$12 billion loan.

- **Non-Petroleum exports record \$4.1 Billion in January, February 2019**

Egyptian non-petroleum exports, recorded \$4.104 billion in January and February 2019, including \$3.143 billion for industrial products and \$961 billion for food products, the Export and Import Control Authority said.

In statements on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2019, head of the authority Ismail Gaber said that member states of the Arab League received 37.3% of the Egyptian non-petroleum exports in January and February, which were worth \$1.532 billion. He added that the EU came next by \$1.228 billion, followed by the US by \$290 million.

- **IMF expects Egypt's debt to decline to 74% of GDP by 2022/2023**

Egypt has preserved macroeconomic stability thanks to the authorities' sound policy implementation, according to the IMF's staff report for the fourth review of the Egyptian economy on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2019.

Egypt's total public debt is projected to continue to shrink to about 74% of the gross domestic product (GDP) by 2022/2023 given the implementation of the economic reform program, the report said.

The figure is expected to be driven by the recovery of tourism, construction, expansion in the gas extractives and investment sectors and proceeding with the implementation of strong structural reforms.

- **Egypt's economic growth hits 5.5%, highest in decade: Min.**

Egypt's economy has achieved its highest growth rate within a decade to reach 5.5 percent, thanks to the economic reform program adopted by the government, Planning Minister Hala el Saaed said on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2019.

Minister Saeed made the remarks while reviewing Egypt's economic reform program with Adviser to Pakistan's Prime Minister on Institutional Reforms and Austerity Ishrat Hussain on the fringe of the 44th annual meeting of Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) board of governors in Morocco, taking place on April 5-6 in the Moroccan city of Marrakesh.

- **CBE: Margin of Egypt's sovereign credit risk swaps declined in January**

The Central Bank of Egypt (CBE) said, on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2019, that the margin of Egypt's sovereign risk swaps has slightly declined in January compared to the majority of countries with similar sovereign credit ratings. The decline had a positive impact on the revenues of Egypt's international bonds, which also decreased in the same month, the CBE said in a statement on Egypt's fiscal policy in April.

- **Annual inflation rate falls to 8.9% in March**

Egypt's annual core inflation slashed to 8.9% in March, versus 9.2% in February, data by the Central Bank of Egypt (CBE) showed on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2019. The state's consumer price index (CPI) recorded 0.5% last month, compared to 1% in February, the CBE added in a statement.

- **Moody's upgrades Egypt's ratings to B2, stable outlook**

Moody's Investors Service ("Moody's") on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2019 upgraded the long-term foreign and local currency issuer ratings of the Government of Egypt to B2 from B3. The outlook was changed to stable from positive. The decision to upgrade the rating primarily reflects:

Moody's expectation that ongoing fiscal and economic reforms will support a gradual but steady improvement in Egypt's fiscal metrics and raise real GDP growth.

Moody's increasing confidence that factors such as Egypt's large domestic funding base support its resilience to refinancing shocks notwithstanding the government's very high borrowing needs and interest costs.

- **Economic reform program with IMF to be ended this year**

Finance Minister Mohamed Maait asserted that the economic reform program between Egypt and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) will come to an end this year on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2019

The minister added that a technical delegation of the IMF will arrive in Cairo next May for conducting final and last review of the program as a prelude to cashing the last disbursement from the loan of the IMF to the tune of \$2 billion.

## Bilateral Relations

- During the month of April 2019, a total of 45 trade enquiries were received, out of which 40 enquiries were from India and 05 from Egypt.
- There were a total of 09 trade disputes, 04 of which were received from India and 05 of which were received from Egypt.
- There were a total of (0) candidates joined ITEC programmes in addition to (0) Candidates joined courses IAFS-III, (0) candidates for C.V. Raman and (0) candidates for AARDO programmes. (total =0)

## Events

- The delegation from Pharmexcil comprising 26 Indian companies participated in Pharmaconex 2019 Exhibition held at Egypt International Exhibition Centre (EIEC), Cairo from 6-8 April 2019. The Indian companies represented a wide range of products including APIs, herbals, nutraceuticals, pallets and surgical and finished formulations. The Indian pavilion was inaugurated on April 06, 2019 jointly by Ambassador and Dr. Tamer Essam, Deputy Health Minister of Egypt. Pharmaconex is the leading pharmaceutical event in North Africa and Middle East and is an important platform to present products, services and technologies in pharmaceutical sector.
- The delegation from National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) led by Mr. A K. Gupta, Director (Commercial) visited Egypt from April 19-22, 2019. During the visit, NTPC and Egyptian Company for Mechanical and Electrical Projects (Kahromika) signed MoU for co-operation in energy projects including power generation, renewable energy and maintenance of turbines in Egypt and MENA region. The delegation also met with senior officials of Ministry of Electricity and New & Renewable Energy Authority of Egypt.
- A delegation led by Ms. Aruna Sundararajan, Secretary, Department of Telecommunications visited Egypt from April 18-21, 2019 for bilateral discussions and to explore the possibility of collaborations in various areas of telecommunications and ICT sectors including Artificial Intelligence (AI), cyber security; IT enabled smart cities and capacity building. During the visit, delegation called on Dr. Amr Talaat, Minister of Communications and IT (MCIT) of Egypt, held bilateral discussions with Eng. Khaled El Attar, Vice Minister, MCIT and visited several institutes under the aegis of MCIT – Information Technology Institute (ITI), National Telecom Regulatory Authority (NTRA), Information Technology Industry Development Authority (ITIDA), Technology Innovation and Entrepreneurship Centre (TIEC) and National Telecommunication Institute (NTI).
- The delegation from Larsen & Toubro Construction Company led by Mr. Nidhi Kumar, Head of Business development visited Egypt from 18 - 25 April 2019 explore new opportunities and cooperation in the transportation infrastructure sector. The Embassy facilitated the following meetings for delegation with :
  1. Eng. Moustafa Saad (Business development department Manager) at the Arab Contractors.

2. Prof. Mohsen Adel, Executive Director, General Authority for Investment (GAFI)
  3. Amb Mahmoud Allam, Minister's Advisor for International Cooperation, Ministry of Transportation
- As a part of states promotion activities, Mission launched month long publicity campaign of promoting tourism of states of Goa, Odisha, Tripura and Telangana on 25 April 2019 at Al Ahly Sporting Club, one of the prominent clubs in Cairo.

## Egypt and World

- **SCEZone inks deal with Chinese TEDA**

Head of the Suez Canal Authority (SCA) Mohab Mamish attended, on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019, the inking ceremony of a deal between the Suez Canal Economic Zone (SCZone) and Chinese industrial developer Tianjin Economic-Technological Development Area (TEDA) Company. The ceremony marked the handover of the second expansion phase of TEDA area at the Suez Canal Economic Zone. Under the deal, the Chinese firm will be responsible for developing an area of 7.3 square kilometers of the SCZone.

- **"Long-term" contract for operating gas pipeline with Jordan**

Petroleum Minister Tareq al-Molla and Jordanian Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Hala Zwati have witnessed inking a long-term contract, in Jordan's Amman between Jordanian Egyptian FAJR for Natural Gas Transmission and Supply Co. Ltd and technical company for operating gas pipelines services, to operate and carry out maintenance works on the natural gas pipeline in Jordan and offer required facilitation for it.

- **Egypt, KSA agree to cooperate in IT domain**

Egypt and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) have agreed on boosting cooperation and sharing expertise in the field of Information Technology (IT) and Digitization on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2019. This came during a meeting between Prime Minister Moustafa Madbouli and visiting Saudi Communication Minister Abdullah bin Amer Alswaha.

- **Cabinet media center: \$2.244bn value of US investments in Egypt in 2018**

The US is the third largest investor in Egypt in 2017-2018 with total investments of \$2.244 billion, against \$1.832 billion registered in 2016-2017, an increase of 22.5%, the Cabinet media center said on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2019.

Egypt is the largest recipient of the US investments in Africa and the second in the Middle East region, the center said, adding that the US investments in the country represented 17.7% of the total inflows.

- **Egypt, UAE cooperate to implement national, developmental projects**

Minister of Military Production Mohamed el Assar and UAE businessman Shiekh Tahnoon Bin Saeed Al Nahyan witnessed the inking ceremony of a cooperation protocol between the Egyptian National Organization for Military Production (NOMP) and TAN Group of the UAE in the field of investment and manufacture on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2019.

The protocol aims at boosting cooperation between the companies of military production and the UAE companies to implement a number of projects.

- **Plant for producing motor scooters in partnership with China**

Industry Minister Amr Nassar on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2019 asserted that "SUNRA" Chinese Company, a major company specialized in the producing of motor scooters, seeks to pump new investments into the Egyptian market for meeting the needs of consumers and exporting to the foreign markets.

He noted that the total investments of the project hit about \$10 million, as the company seeks to carry out an integrated project for producing such a kind of scooters in Egypt. This came in a meeting held between the minister and a key official at the company in question.

- **Egypt expected to sign free trade deal with EAEU by end of 2019**

Armenian Ambassador in Cairo Karen Grigorian said on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2019 that Egypt is expected to sign a free trade agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) - currently under Armenia - by the end of 2019.

In statements to MENA, he said the deal will promote economic and trade cooperation between Egypt and the union as well as between Egypt and Armenia. He added that the deal will also offer a good chance for Armenian companies to access African markets.

- **Egypt purchases 240,000 tons of Romanian, Ukrainian wheat**

The General Authority for Supply Commodities (GASC) said, on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2019, that it had inked contracts to import 240,000 tons of wheat from Romania and Ukraine. Upon an international bid, Egypt will import 180,000 tons of wheat from Romania and 60,000 tons from Ukraine, GASC said in a statement. The quantities will be delivered from May 20 to June 5, it added.

- **Egyptian-Swiss consortium for using solar energy in industry**

The industry ministry on April 14<sup>th</sup> 2019, launched a road map to supporting the local manufacturing for the systems of heating water via the solar energy and in cooperation with the private sector and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) via an international-Egyptian-Swiss consultancy consortium. The consortium aims at promoting using the new and renewable energy and encouraging and using it in the heating operations in industry.

- **Investment project to yield palm dates in new valley in cooperation with (UAE)'s Jenaan investment LLC**

The executive committee of the Tahia Misr Fund principally approved an offer on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2019 from the United Arab Emirates (UAE)'s Jenaan Investment LLC Company to establish an investment enterprise for yielding palm dates in the Upper Egyptian New Valley governorates.

Investment Minister Dr. Sahar Nasr and Minister of State for Military Production Major General Mohamed El Assar were present during the meeting. The investment project aimed to produce palm dates in New Valley in cooperation with Egyptian Tahia Misr Fund and the State Ministry for Military Production.

- **Egypt, Jordan probe coop. on customs e-linkage**

The Red Sea Ports Authority said on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2019 that a meeting was held between representatives of the Egyptian and Jordanian customs authorities within the framework of the UN Development Program to promote Arab economic integration for sustainable development. The meeting discussed mechanisms for electronic linkage between the two countries' customs authorities, the Red Sea Ports Authority said in a statement.

- **Sisi in BRI forum: Egypt Carried out Mega National Projects to Develop Infrastructure**

Speaking at a roundtable meeting of the second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2019, Sisi said Egypt has carried out a series of mega national projects over the past few years to develop its infrastructure in a way that helps The President noted that Cairo is implementing a great project to develop the Suez Canal Corridor to help make it an international logistical and economic center that effectively contributes to facilitating navigation movement and international trade. This project is complementary to the Belt and Road Initiative that mainly depends on the concept of economic corridors for development, Sisi pointed out.

- **Telecom Egypt, Chinese Companies Sign Joint Agreement**

Telecom Egypt signed a binding letter of intent (LoI) with Pakistan & East Africa Connecting Europe (PEACE) Cable International Network Co. and its affiliate HENGTONG OPTIC-ELECTRIC, the Chinese technology and industrial giant.

Minister of Communications and Information Technology Amr Talaat attended the signing ceremony. The deal aims to enrich the partnership between PEACE and Telecom Egypt further and extending it to other service lines.

- **Cairo, Beijing Sign Partnership Agreement to Jointly Manufacture Electric Vehicles in Egypt**

Minister of Military Production Mohamed el Assar and Minister of Trade and Industry Amr Nassar attended on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2019 the signing ceremony of a partnership agreement with China on joint manufacturing of electric vehicles in Egypt.

The agreement was signed by two representatives of Egypt's Military Factory 200 and a representative of China's Foton Motor Co. The partnership deal includes joint manufacturing of 2,000 buses within four years, in which the Egyptian component represents 45 percent. Assar added that this project will be followed by other phases of joint manufacturing of other types of electric vehicles in cooperation with the Military Factory 200.

## **Market Watch**

- **CBE: Oil trade balance achieved surplus of \$150.8m since 4 years**

Egypt's oil trade balance achieved for the first time in four years a surplus of USD 150.8 million during the first half of the FY 2018/19, against a deficit of USD 2.2 billion in the same period in the previous fiscal, the Central Bank of Egypt (CBE) announced.

In its report released on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019, the CBE said that the volume of goods' exports increased by 18.4 percent to reach USD 14.3 billion in the first half of FY 2018/19, against USD 12.1 billion in the previous year.



- **Finance ministry: e-payment of Govt service fees applicable as of May 1st**

The Finance Ministry announced that citizens will have to pay their fees for governmental services via any E-payment means as of May 1<sup>st</sup>. According to a statement issued by the Finance Ministry on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019, these services will include also taxes and customs duties. The measure comes in implementation of the National Council for Payments' decisions shifting the society in Egypt to a digital society and achieving financial inclusion, added the statement.

- **Petroleum ministry, IFC sign memo on petroleum infrastructure projects**

Petroleum Minister Tareq el Mulla witnessed on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2019 the inking of a memo between the ministry and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) on funding infrastructure projects of the petroleum and natural gas sectors.

This falls within the framework of supporting Egypt's strategy to turn into a regional hub for petroleum and natural gas trade, the ministry said in a statement. The memo is meant also to bolster refining and petrochemical industries, especially through contributing to the new Alamein complex.

- **EETC, Elsewedy electric sign contract for establishing power transmission line of Benban solar complex**

Egyptian Electricity Transmission Company (EETC) Chairperson Sabah Mashali signed on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2019 for a 1.7-billion-pound contract with Elsewedy Electric for establishing a 500-kilo volt power transmission line at Benban solar park in the Upper Egypt city of Aswan.

The 195-kilometer-long line will be set up within six months, the ministry said, noting that the company has secured the needed funds for the line's establishment. Benban solar park is set to be the largest solar plant in the world. It will cover Egypt's electricity needs and edge it forward on its path to becoming the region's energy hub. Benban, built in the eastern region of the Sahara Desert, is set to produce between 1.6 and 2.0 GW of solar power by mid-2019.

- **New criteria for allotting industrial lands**

The government has decided to apply new criteria for allotting industrial lands. Prime Minister Moustafa Madbouli asserted, on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2019 in a meeting with the members of the allocation system review committee, that these criteria give priority to the national strategy and are characterized by easy dealing via the website.

For his part, cabinet spokesman Nader Saad stated that the meeting handled the main aspects for reforming the process of allotting industrial lands, adding that the new system targets meeting the real demand for these lands, in a way that ensures the successful and quick exploitation of these lands, in addition to contributing to the implementation of the national industry strategy. The aspects also included allotting and pricing lands for industrialists in a transparent and competitive way, in addition to excluding the brokers.

- **Egypt increases rice area cultivation to 1.075m feddans**

Agriculture Minister Ezz el Din Abu Steit on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2019 announced increasing the area cultivated with rice to 1,075,000 acres, up from 800,000 acres the previous year, in a bid to increase local production of the staple crop using available resources.

The minister made the remarks in a joint press release with Sharqia Governor Mamdouh Gharab. Egypt slashed cultivation of the water-intensive crop in 2018 to preserve water resources as Ethiopia prepares to fill the reservoir of a giant dam project it is building upstream on the Rive Nile, which Cairo fears could cut the country's water supply.

- **Agriculture ministry: Egypt to establish biggest gelatin factory in Mideast**

Egypt is seeking to establish a factory to produce food and medical gelatin, the biggest in the Middle East on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2019. Undersecretary of Agriculture Mona Mehrez and advisor to the trade minister Yasser el Maghrabi met with representatives of a German company that aspires to establish a gelatin factory in Egypt. Mehrez stated that Agriculture Minister Ezze-din Abu Steit fully supports the project, which would help create jobs for youth and open up new export markets.

- **PM attends signing of agreement to establish new Rosetta city**

Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouli on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2019 attended the signing ceremony of a cooperation protocol to establish New Rosetta city in Beheira governorate.

The protocol was signed between the Housing Ministry's New Urban Communities Authority and Behaira Governorate in the presence of ministers of local development and housing. The protocol aims to carry out development works in the city, to be established on an area of 333 feddans.

- **Egypt imposes new tariffs on rebar, billet imports**

Egypt's Ministry of Trade and Industry has decided to impose import tariffs on steel rebar and iron billets for a period of 180 days, starting from April 11 2019.

The decision was meant to secure the national industry and economy as well as the local manufacturers. The decision will see a 25% and 15% import levy imposed on steel rebar and iron billets, respectively.

Meanwhile, steel factories expressed concerns over the new decision, pointing out that such tariffs would leave 30,000 workers without work. In a press conference, the Chamber of Metallurgical Industries said that around 22 small factories will be threatened to stop operation if the decision is applied.

- **Mamish announces start of construction works of Suez petrochemicals complex**

Chairman of the Suez Canal Authority Mohab Mamish announced on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2019 the start of the construction works of a petrochemicals complex in Ain Sokhna city in Suez at investment costs of \$10.8 billion. The complex is considered the biggest project in the field of petrochemicals in the Middle East reign.



- **Trade minister: Govt keen on production of eco-friendly electric cars**

Minister of Trade and Industry Amr Nassar on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2019 asserted that the government was keen on encouraging the production of electric cars in Egypt given the fact that the future of the automobile industry worldwide is heading towards the use of eco-friendly cars. This came in a statement released by the Ministry of Trade and Industry on Nassar's participation on behalf of Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouli in a ceremony organized by The Bavarian Auto Group on launching the BMWi series of i8 coupe and i3 electric cars and i8 roadster for the first time in the Middle East market and Africa.

- **Egypt to host 26th WEF 2020**

Egypt will host the 26th round of the Women Economic Forum (WEF) in March 2020. These remarks were made by Chairman of Egypt's National Council for Women (NCW) Maya Morsi during her participation in the WEF 2019 currently held in India. In a statement on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2019, Morsi lauded the strenuous efforts of Egyptian Ambassador to India Heba el Marasi and former ambassador Hatem Tag el Din so that Egypt can host the forum.

- **Egypt's agricultural exports unprecedentedly jumped in 2018**

The Cabinet's media center, on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2019, said that Egypt's agriculture exports unprecedentedly jumped in 2018. The center detailed in an info graph released on its Facebook page that cotton exports went up from \$169 million in 2017 to \$201 million in 2018, with an 18.9% rise.

Fruit exports increased by 38.4%, while dates surged by 254.4%. Exports of citrus fruits also jumped by rates ranging between 11.1% to 28.5%.

- **WB okays project worth USD 200m to support SMEs in Egypt**

The World Bank (WB) gave its final approval to a new project worth USD 200 million for supporting reforms aimed at securing further jobs for young people and women in Egypt. The project is meant to increase the volume of credit to Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs), for being a key source of economic growth.

In a statement released on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2019, Minister of Investment and International Cooperation Sahar Nasr stated that the project comes within the framework of ongoing cooperation between the Investment and International Cooperation Ministry and the Micro, Small & Medium Enterprise Development Agency (MSME), with a view to backing entrepreneurs, especially women.

- **Production of methanol, petrochemicals' derivatives will be expanded**

Minister of Petroleum Engineer Tareq el Molla on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2019 said that the Egyptian natural gas supplies are available to help our country expand the production of derivatives of the varied petrochemicals.

These products will provide Egypt with a value added privilege to the Egyptian national economy and natural wealth, said the Minister. Tareq el Molla met with Brad Boyed, the deputy chairman of the of global Methanecs corporation. They discussed means of developing the work mechanisms to boost the production abilities of the Methanecs Corporation in the Egyptian markets.

- **Egypt, the first in original travel's ranking of VIP's top destinations**

Egypt is the hottest destination billionaires are traveling to this year, according to boutique luxury travel agency Original Travel, which plans trips for high-net-worth individuals. The Egyptian luxury resorts on the Red Sea lure the billionaires to make sea-cruising excursions and other sightseeing tours. The country came in first in Original Travel's ranking of top destinations where billionaires are headed in 2019, which it determined by looking at the number of bookings and performance; the latter was assessed by a combination of feedback and client inquiries. Their 2019 bookings for Egypt are set to triple last year's bookings, Amelia Stewart, brand ambassador for Original Travel, told Business Insider.

- **Egypt considers establishing freight, maritime transport Co with Africa**

PM Madbouli directed officials to make a full vision for establishing a national company for freight and maritime transport aimed at boosting trading links with Africa on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2019.

This came during his meeting with Transport Minister Kamel el Wazir, Chairman of the Suez Canal Economic Zone (SCZone) Mohab Mamish, assistant foreign minister for African affairs Abu Bakr el Hefni and other officials.

Madbouli stated that the company aimed at reinforcing ties with Africa, as this idea was introduced during the preparatory meetings for Egypt's presidency to the AU, in addition to that it was an important proposal various Egyptian export councils.

- **Industry Min. extends fees on crust leather exports for 1 year**

Trade and Industry Minister Amr Nassar has extended fees on crust leather exports for one year to start May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2019. The decision is meant to meet local demands for crust leather, said Dr Amany el Wassal, head of the agreements sector at the Ministry of Trade and Industry, adding that this should also help increase the value added of national products.

Applicable since 2017, the fees have contributed to reducing prices of crust leather in Egypt and have positively reflected on final products, Wassal added.

- **Industry min. witnesses signing of project for youth employment in Egypt**

Trade and Industry Minister Amr Nassar on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2019 witnessed the signing of a project contract to create job openings for young people and address the main roots behind illegal migration in Egypt.

The project is co-implemented with the International Labor Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations Development Program. It is funded by the UN Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS).

During the signing ceremony, Nassar said the government is currently working on the development of new policies and radical reforms to handle the challenges of illegal migration, with satisfying increased employment needs of youth.

- **FEI launches website on cement logistics**

The Federation of Egyptian industries (FEI)- affiliate Building Materials Chamber subsidiary Cement Division said it has launched its first ever website with a view to offering vital information for all bodies concerned with the cement sector across the nation on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2019.

The website - to be visited through the link: (<https://cementdivision.com/ar/>) - is envisaged to be one of key communication tools with all bodies concerned of the cement industry.

- **Egypt to amend public enterprise law in second half of 2019: Minister**

Egypt's Public Enterprises Minister Hisham Tawfik on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2019 said that the public enterprise law will be amended in the second half of 2019.

During a meeting with members of the Egyptian Credit Risk Association, Tawfik said that the amendments are meant to allow board of directors of companies to compete in the market. The minister said that the state-owned financial technology company e-finance as well as two mining companies will be part of the second wave of the state privatization program, which is set to begin as early as September.

- **Egypt in talks with AFESD to support 17 new projects**

Minister of Investment and International Cooperation Sahar Nasr said on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2019 that talks are underway with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD) to support the implementation of 17 new projects in Egypt with a total amount of 2.35 billion dollars.

Egypt and AFESD cooperation portfolio already amounts to five billion dollars, which covers 63 projects in various fields, Nasr said during her participation in the inaugural session of annual meetings of Arab financial institutions and bodies in Kuwait.

- **Partial sale of Banque du Caire**

Banque du Caire has announced it will offer a portion of its shares for sale on the stock market. The offering will take place before the end of the year and is expected to garner between \$300 and \$400 million.

The bank, owned by Banque Misr, the second-largest state-owned bank in Egypt, will offer 20 or 30 per cent of its shares for private placement and public offering, but it has yet to decide on the percentage of each. It is currently negotiating with EFG Hermes and HSBC, the investment banks in charge of the offering, regarding the promotion among potential buyers.

- **Sisi will witness opening of Mega National Projects in Ismailia and Central Sinai**

President Sisi will witness the inauguration of mega national projects in Ismailia and central Sinai, topped by tunnels in the Suez Canal and new Ismailia city on the first week of May. The projects fall within the framework of the all-out state development plan. Mega factories were set up in central Sinai to secure jobs and encourage investment and trade. New Ismailia city consists of six residential areas. The 2,828-feddan city can accommodate up to 250,000 people. The first two stages of New Ismailia city are to be opened on May 5, 2019, and efforts are underway to accomplish the third stage.

Five tunnels were set up under the Suez Canal - south of Port Said, North of Ismailia and north of Suez - within the framework of an all-out development plan of Sinai. The development plan also aims at linking Sinai to various parts of the country in addition to shrinking the transit time in the Suez. Two tunnels were established for cars with up-to-date security systems. The tunnels are wide enough for 2000 cars per hour.

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