

Brief Embassy Report on Bilateral Relations – ITJ Division, DGCI&S, Kolkata.

India-Ukraine Bilateral Relation

A. Introduction

1. Indian Trade Journal (ITJ) division of the Director General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIS) brings out weekly publication on Embassy Profile Report providing information on recent policy changes and happenings in other countries that may be of interest to the Indian trading community. This is the Profile Report depicting the Embassy of Ukraine.
2. Ukraine is the largest country in Europe with an area of about 6 lakh sq. km and a population of over 37 million. India recognised Ukraine's independence in December 1991, established diplomatic relations in January 1992, and opened an Embassy in Kyiv in May 1992.
3. India-Ukraine relations have steadily grown and expanded over the past more than three decades. There is mutual and abiding interest in further deepening and expansion of bilateral relations, especially in context of trade and commerce, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, defence, education, science and technology, and culture, apart from enhancing the interaction between the two sides at various levels.
4. In terms of recent high-level contacts, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and the President of Ukraine, H.E. Volodymyr Zelenskyy have had three bilateral meetings on the margins of multilateral events. The most recent meeting between both leaders took place on 14 June 2024 on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in Apulia. Previously, they had met in Hiroshima in May 2023 on the margins of G7 summit, and in November 2019 on the sidelines of COP26. Both leaders have also had seven telephone conversations so far.

B. Commercial Relations (Trade and Foreign Investment) – Recent facts & figures

5. Bilateral trade between the two countries had grown steadily to reaching US\$ 3.386 billion in 2021-22 (Department of Commerce, GOI). However, the bilateral trade declined in the last two years due to the challenges posed by the Russia-Ukraine conflict including logistical issues. The trade figures for the last 5 financial years are as follows:

Export-Import statistics as per India's Ministry of Commerce data bank from 2019-20 to 2023-24 are as follows :

Export-Import statistics from 2019-20 to 2023-24

(US Dollar Million)

Year	Total trade	Import	Export
2019-20	2524.60	2060.79	463.81

2020-21	2590.83	2139.86	450.97
2021-22	3386.29	2913.61	472.68
2022-23	782.94	650.26	132.68
2023-24	713.16	539.86	173.30

(Source: Department of Commerce, India)

6. The main items of export from Ukraine to India are vegetable oils, other cereals, coal, coke and briquettes, oil meals, pulses etc. while, pharmaceuticals, miscellaneous processed items, auto tyres and tubes, coffee, products of iron and steel etc. are the major Indian exports to Ukraine. In value terms, India is the third largest exporter of pharmaceutical products to Ukraine, after Germany and France.

7. The latest meeting of the JWG was held virtually on 20 June 2024. After the 7th meeting in 2018, both sides agreed to support 10 joint projects in the field of metals & material sciences, computational science, earth and environmental sciences, aerospace engineering and biological sciences.

8. Four rounds of India-Ukraine consultations on consular issues have been held so far: May 2011(Kyiv), May 2012 (New Delhi), May 2013 (Kyiv) and February 2024 (virtual mode). The agreement on visa exemption for the diplomatic passport holders was signed during the visit of the Ukrainian Foreign Minister to India in November 2011. India has included Ukraine in the list of countries under the e-Visa Scheme since 27 November 2014.

9. Before the conflict, Ukraine was a major destination for Indian students, particularly for those interested in studying medical stream. India accounted for the largest share of foreign students studying in Ukraine. There were around 22,700 Indian students enrolled in Ukraine (about 21,900 medical and about 800 non-medical) in the 2021-22 academic session. Following the conflict, most of the Indian students were evacuated and returned to India. The Ukrainian Universities switched to on-line education for foreign students. A total of about 2000 Indian students are currently enrolled at various Ukrainian Universities and Institutions.

10. The Agreement on the establishment of the Indian-Ukrainian Inter governmental Commission (IGC) on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological, Industrial and Cultural Cooperation was signed in 1994. So far six meetings of IGC have been held, with the sixth meeting taking place in February 2018 in Kyiv. The IGC plays an important role in guiding cooperation between the two countries in many areas including through its Joint Working Groups.

11. Foreign Office Consultations(FOCs) between the two countries have been held, the ninth Round of FOCs was held in Kyiv on 11 July 2023.

12. Defence cooperation is one of the strong pillars of bilateral relations and a promising area for future collaboration between Ukraine and India. Ukraine has been a source of military technology and equipment for India since its independence including for procurement of spares and equipment. The

first meeting of the India-Ukraine Joint Working Group on Defence was held in June 2018 in Kyiv. Indian and Ukrainian companies are exploring opportunities for greater collaboration and partnership in this area. Ukrainian companies participate in various defence exhibitions and expos in India.

13. In order to address the challenges faced by Indian students following the onset of the conflict, the National Medical Commission of India (NMC) as well as the Ukrainian side have permitted following major exemptions/relaxations to enable affected students to complete their courses: (a) Permanent transfer for Indian students to third country medical universities; (b) Temporary academic mobility to universities in 29 countries; and (c) Online classes for theory subjects, which should mandatorily be supplemented by offline practical and clinical training at the University and/or its affiliated hospital during their MBBS course.

14. India was among the first countries to begin providing humanitarian assistance to Ukraine after the breakout of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine in February 2022. Since then, the Government of India has provided 16 consignments measuring over 135 tons of humanitarian aid to Ukraine and neighbouring countries comprising generator sets, medicines, medical equipment, blankets, tents, sleeping bags, tarpaulin, medical equipment, etc. India has also provided financial assistance to the Kyiv Gymnasium of Oriental Language No. 1 for reconstruction, remodelling and refurbishment of some of its classrooms and to the Ukraine-India association for its programme aimed at restoration of psychological health of youth and children. In addition, Indian Pharmaceutical Companies have donated more than US\$ 10 million worth of medical aid and financial assistance to Ukraine. Many other Indians and Indian organizations have provided food, and other humanitarian relief to the people of Ukraine.

15. There was a small but active Indian community in Ukraine, which was mainly located in Kyiv, Odessa, Kharkiv and Lviv. Most Indians in Ukraine were either professionals or engaged in business including in manufacturing, packaging, trading and service industry. Most of them left Ukraine following the beginning of the ongoing conflict. It is estimated that around 200 Indian nationals besides 2,000 Indian students are presently in Ukraine. The local Indian community had formed an association called “India Club”, which celebrates Indian festivals and organized cultural events.

16. The Government of India launched operation Ganga to evacuate the Indian citizens, who were stranded in Ukraine following the outbreak of the conflict in February 2022. In total, 90 flights were arranged to evacuate more than 18,000 Indian nationals and students. There is a keen interest in Indian culture in Ukraine which includes various Indian art forms, literature, yoga, spirituality and philosophy. There are more than 30 Ukrainian cultural associations/groups spread across the country, engaged in promoting Indian art forms. As part of promotion of the Hindi language, regular contacts are maintained with the local institutes/universities teaching Hindi. Each year, about seven India-Ukraine Friendship Societies involved in the promotion of Indian dance and culture are given grant-in-aid approved by Ministry of Culture of India.

17. A ‘Ukrainian Association of Ayurveda and Yoga (UAAY)’ was formed and registered as a legal entity in Ukraine in September 2018 with the basic purpose of promoting Ayurveda as an alternative

system of medicine and allowing Ayurveda medicines to be imported in Ukraine as medicines and not only as food supplements. UAAY organized two International Congress on Ayurveda and Yoga, one in November 2019 and second in June 2023.

18. On the occasion of 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi ‘Vaishanv Jan to.’ bhajan was recorded by a famous Ukrainian Singer. A Statue of Mahatma Gandhi was inaugurated at a Botanical Garden, Kyiv on October 02, 2020. The area in the park around the statue has been named the “Oasis of Peace”.

Source: www.mea.gov.in
