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HEADING TOWARDS
THE NEW LEVEL:
RELATIONS IN THE
ERA OF SHAKY
GEOPOLITICS



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Olga Vorozhbyt
Heading Towards the New Level: Indo-Ukrainian Relations in the Era of
Shaky Geopolitics

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The publication is prepared within the project the "Global Partnerships: Expert Diplomacy 2.0". This publication was compiled with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation. Its content is the exclusive responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily reflect the views of the International Renaissance Foundation.

Ukraine-India: Heading Towards the New Level. Relations in the Era of Shaky Geopolitics

Olga Vorozhbyt

Summary

2024 has become the year of many geopolitical shifts, with nearly half of the world population casting ballots, the highest number of conflicts since WWII, the further rise of AI, and the fall of the Assad regime in Syria, among others. All this, together with Russia's aggressive behaviour vis-à-vis Europe, the Russian war against Ukraine and the international agenda of the new US administration, has been reshaping strategic alliances and contributing to global instabilities. With China trying to get space Russia and the US released in different parts of the world and the EU looking for a new geostrategic role, the world enters a period of turbulence or, as this paper notes, "shaky geopolitics".

For bilateral relations between Ukraine and India, 2024 became the year of a big positive political shift with the first-ever visit of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Ukraine, which resulted in the number of signed agreements and increased interest in cooperation at least from the side of Ukraine.

Yet both countries should still find the best place for each other in their international agenda. One of the steps to achieve this goal is to perform what was agreed upon during the meetings and negotiations over the last years and to search for "islands of stability" in the cooperation between the two states. Economic (agriculture and pharmaceuticals), security (nuclear security and tech cooperation), and cultural exchanges and cooperation on the UN reform look prosperous for the bilateral relations of the two countries during the times of "shaky geopolitics".

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INTRODUCTION

Ukraine and India share a long history of bilateral relations with both ups and downs during the last thirty years and a profound cooperation during the Soviet period (see [Ukraine — India: End of Free Fall of Soviet Legacy?](#))¹. Since the beginning of the Russian war against Ukraine, India has preserved strategic neutrality, yet seeing itself as “not neutral, but on the side of peace”² (as Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi noted during his historic visit to Ukraine on August 23, 2024).

The year 2024 has become a landmark for Ukraine-India relations with multiple meetings between the leaders of the countries, new bilateral agreements, and, most notably, the first-ever visit of the Indian Prime Minister to Ukraine (August 2024).

2024 also witnessed major geopolitical shifts, including the fall of the Assad regime in Syria, the further rise of AI, and elections in key countries, including Donald Trump elected as the 47th United States President. The policies and statements of the new US administration have received mixed reactions from its European partners. Recently, the U.S. announced that it would stop the military aid supply to Ukraine, which was later resumed, but the decision still may influence the situation on the frontline. The US president has also announced 25% tariffs on goods from its partner countries, Canada, and Mexico.³ Washington has also been waging a trade war with China, where Beijing has already announced retaliatory tariffs.⁴ US President Donald Trump announced the possibility of reciprocal tariffs on US imports from some other countries, including India, which might be implemented from April 2, 2025⁵. According to the media reports, the Indian government is working with the US counterparts to “eliminate tariffs and non-tariff barriers and improve trade”⁶. In parallel, China is coming as a more resolute actor in the world area, trying to get the space Russia and the US release in different parts of the world, demonstrating a more assertive position against some Asian states and pretending to be the voice of the Global South. The EU member states and the organisation, as a whole, are searching for a new, more influential role in world politics.

¹ O. Vorozhbyt, Ukraine — India: End of Free Fall of Soviet Legacy? Foreign Policy Council "Ukrainian Prism", 2023, <https://prismua.org/en/india/>

² Dinakar Peri, Not neutral, India on the side of peace, says PM Modi in Ukraine as 'landmark' visit ends, The Hindu, 24.08.2024, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/prime-minister-narendra-modi-on-a-historic-visit-to-ukraine-on-august-23-2024/article68558850.ece>

³ Auzinea Bacon, Trump says tariffs on Mexico and Canada 'could go up,' declines to rule out possible recession, CNN, 9.09.2025, <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/03/09/business/trump-tariffs-canada-mexico-recession/index.html>

⁴ Joel Guinto, Can Trump's tariffs break China's grip on manufacturing? BBC News, 05.05.2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cdxqeg51y36o>

⁵ Payal Bhattacharya, In Charts: What reciprocal tariff threat could mean for Indian goods, Mint, 07.03.2025, <https://www.livemint.com/news/reciprocal-tariff-threat-indian-exports-us-donald-trump-china-brazil-canada-mexico-fta-gdp-growth-11741347035838.html>

⁶ Ravi Dutta Mishra, India continues to engage US: Govt to House amid fears of reciprocal tariff, The Indian Express, 12.03.2025, <https://indianexpress.com/article/business/india-continues-to-engage-us-govt-to-house-amid-fears-of-reciprocal-tariff-9881648/>

The new US administration sees its role in the world as less globally proactive and more concentrated on its internal challenges. Just recently, State Secretary Marco Rubio has stated that the “effort to be the world’s “parent” has distracted the U.S. from pursuing its own national interests”⁷. In a discussion at Chatham House in London, Indian Minister for Foreign Affairs, S. Jaishankar, suggested that the latest foreign policy shifts of the US administration are “good” for India, as New Delhi sees “the American president that moves towards multipolarity”⁸ and this is the global vision India shares.

With all the challenges, the world enters an era of shaky geopolitics, which will influence alliances and bilateral relations between the states. In such periods, ‘small islands of stability’ are worth looking for, also in bilateral relations. For Ukraine and India, these are economy (agriculture and pharmaceuticals), security (nuclear security and tech cooperation), and enhancement of cultural cooperation (to broaden mutual understanding). The topic of the UN reform also stays relevant to the interests of both countries, though the final goal of the two is different.

⁷ Brantly Womack, Rubio's revolutionary downsizing of America's global role, The Hill, 20.02.2025, <https://thehill.com/opinion/international/5153362-rubios-revolutionary-downsizing-of-americas-global-role/>

⁸ Ministry of External Affairs, India, Conversation at Chatham House, YouTube, 05.03.2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6LchSAZdeC8&t=1296s>

ERA OF SHAKY GEOPOLITICS. IS THERE THE ONE TO BENEFIT?

One can find many adjectives to describe the current state of the world, but “stable” would be the last one to use. The post-WWII international system, as well as the post-Cold War order, is crushing. The world is neither unipolar nor bipolar. In many current discussions, it is called multipolar, but as the 2025 Munich Security Conference report rightly concludes: “While today’s world is already multipolar is debatable, the world’s “multipolarisation” is a fact”⁹. The recent changes in US foreign policy after the last presidential elections, together with the consequences of the Russian war against Ukraine and the growing influence of the emerging middle powers, became the last nail into the coffin of the post-war international order.

“The post-war global order is not just obsolete, it is now a weapon being used against us,”¹⁰ US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said during his speech before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, stressing that all this led to a “moment in which we must now confront the single greatest risk of geopolitical instability”¹¹. Looking at actual numbers that mean instabilities, 2023 became the year with the highest number of state-based conflicts since the end of WWII¹², and the Russian war against Ukraine is one of the biggest conflicts on that list.

The Russia-Ukraine war has also been the major factor that has influenced geopolitical stability in the world for the last few years. The outcome of the war, if it brings just and lasting peace with punishment to those responsible for mass killings and violation of international and humanitarian law, may become the push for the creation of the updated rules-based order. If not, we risk plunging into an era of chaos, where the stronger will have power only by the rule of force.

Besides that, the Russian invasion of Ukraine had a major influence **on food security, global economic stability, and global arms trade**. Considered a breadbasket of Europe, Ukraine produced 10% of the world wheat market, 15% of the corn market, and 13% of the barley market¹³. Blocking of Ukrainian food exports to international markets caused a “shock increase in global prices”¹⁴ and resulted in the severe

⁹Munich Security Report 2025, Multipolarisation, Munich Security Conference, February 2025, https://securityconference.org/assets/02_Dokumente/01_Publikationen/2025/MSR_2025/Multipolarization_-_Munich_Security_Report_2025.pdf

¹⁰ Marco Rubio, Opening Remarks by Secretary of State-designate Marco Rubio Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, U.S. Department of State, 15.01.2025, <https://www.state.gov/opening-remarks-by-secretary-of-state-designate-marco-rubio-before-the-senate-foreign-relations-committee/>

¹¹ Ibid

¹² New data shows record number of armed conflicts, Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), 10.06.2024, <https://www.prio.org/news/3532>

¹³ Ines Eisele, Five facts on grain and the war in Ukraine, Deutsche Welle, 11.01.2022, <https://www.dw.com/en/five-facts-on-grain-and-the-war-in-ukraine/a-62601467>

¹⁴ Y. Yakymenko, O. Melnyk, V. Yurchyshyn, International support to Ukraine for provision of the global food security, Razumkov Centre, 23.04.2024, https://razumkov.org.ua/images/2024/05/14/G7_2024_0423_Eng.pdf

disruption of grain exports, which, however, was overcome due to the Black Sea Grain Corridor and the effective work of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. As a result, in 2024, Ukraine, for the first time, exported more grain than in 2021¹⁵ — a year before the full-scale invasion.

The global arms trade also increased with the US dominance. According to the recent SIPRI study¹⁶, the United States further increased its share of global arms exports to 43%, while Ukraine became the world's largest importer of major arms in the last five years.

The Russia—Ukraine war has also been **reshaping global alliances**. European and several Asia-Pacific countries (Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Australia) and the US sided with Ukraine (though with the new US administration, the situation is in reverse now). Multiple countries in Asia and Africa refused taking sides. Iran and North Korea backed Russia. As the US steps down with the new administration in its support of Ukraine, we also see the so-called 'coalition of the willing'¹⁷ under the leadership of the United Kingdom and France to be formed. Nineteen countries committed to maintaining the flow of military aid to Ukraine, supporting and enhancing its defensive military capabilities to deter future aggression following any peace deal.

The rise of **AI technologies, misinformation and cyberwarfare** has created new ways for countries to counter each other. AI technologies have been actively developed and tested on the frontline in Ukraine¹⁸ and other battlegrounds. Yet AI could and is used for the 'global benefit', and the recent AI Action Summit in Paris¹⁹, co-hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, underscored this goal among countries worldwide. There are also multiple endeavours to regulate the usage of AI technologies, and many future outcomes will depend on how the regulation will work. Russian and Chinese mis- and disinformation campaigns are yet another weapon that might be adopted and developed by the states, and nations have to find a way to counter them.

¹⁵ О. Мануїлов, Україна в 2024 році експортувала зерна на \$9,4 млрд. Фізичний обсяг – другий після рекордного 2019-го, Forbes Ukraine, 13.01.2025, <https://forbes.ua/news/ukraina-v-2024-rotsi-eksportuvava-zerna-na-94-mlrd-tse-drugiy-rezultat-pislya-rekordnogo-2019-go-13012025-26239>

¹⁶ Ukraine the world's biggest arms importer; United States' dominance of global arms exports grows as Russian exports continue to fall, SIPRI, 10.03.2025, <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2025/ukraine-worlds-biggest-arms-importer-united-states-dominance-global-arms-exports-grows-russian>

¹⁷ UK to convene 'coalition of the willing' for fresh talks on Ukraine peace force, Financial Times, 10.03.2025, <https://www.ft.com/content/24282a5c-2d4d-460c-956f-24f03c7fc911>

¹⁸ Kateryna Bondar, Ukraine's Future Vision and Current Capabilities for Waging AI-Enabled Autonomous Warfare, CSIS, 06.03.2025, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/ukraines-future-vision-and-current-capabilities-waging-ai-enabled-autonomous-war>

¹⁹ Artificial Intelligence Action Summit, 2025, <https://www.elysee.fr/en/sommet-pour-l-action-sur-l-ia>

Though **China** tries to pretend to be a global stalwart amidst worldwide turbulence, its economic and military development poses a threat²⁰, especially to the region of the Indo-Pacific. With the new US administration's attempts to push China's growing global power, the situation stays extremely volatile. The recent rise of China has also provoked changes in India's strategic threat calculations²¹, as well as in India's public opinion. According to the most recent poll, 43% of Indians see China²² as India's biggest military threat.

²⁰ Omid Rahman Fazel, China's Rise: An Analysis Of Threat To Regional, Eurasia Review, 08.01.2025, Security <https://www.eurasiareview.com/08012025-chinas-rise-an-analysis-of-threat-to-regional-security/>

²¹ Michael Kugelman, China Has Become India's Greatest Threat, Foreign Policy, 19.01.2023, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/01/19/india-china-military-threat-security-pakistan/>

²² Eltaf Najafizada, Indians See US As Biggest Military Threat After China: Survey, NDTV, 17.01.2023, <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/indians-see-us-as-biggest-military-threat-after-china-survey-3700136>

TRAJECTORY OF THE UKRAINE — INDIA RELATIONS SINCE THE FULL-SCALE INVASION

The year 2024 has become the year of the historic shift in India-Ukraine relations. For the first time in the history of independent Ukraine, the Indian Prime Minister visited Kyiv.

As pointed out by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the visit of PM Modi was done on a symbolically important for Ukraine day — August 23, the day of the national flag, on the eve of Independence Day. The work which was done before the visit (meeting of the working groups, etc.) paved the way for the comprehensive bilateral agreement,²³ which covered multiple levels of cooperation:

- **Politically**, it stressed that both states "share interest" in raising the level of bilateral relations from a comprehensive to a strategic partnership in the future.

Before Ukraine, PM Modi visited Poland, where the India-Poland Joint Statement on the Establishment of Strategic Partnership²⁴ was signed. Though some of the Polish experts noted that the agreement needed more content²⁵, the fact that the level of the partnership was increased meant increased interest for India in the whole Eastern European region (moreover, in January 2024, India signed a Strategic Partnership on Innovation Agreement with the Czech Republic²⁶, and over the last years opened its embassies in the Baltic countries).

Also, PM Modi "reaffirmed India's readiness to contribute in every way possible to help bring peace to the region as soon as possible". This was an important statement for Ukraine, as President Zelenskyy suggested later in the interviews that India could become the host for the next Peace Summit.²⁷ However, India would need to join the communique of the first Summit in Switzerland, which India decided not to sign.

²³ Спільна заява України та Індії за підсумками візиту Прем'єр-міністра Індії до України, Офіційне інтернет-представництво Президента України, 23.08.2024, <https://president.gov.ua/news/spilna-zayava-ukrayini-ta-indiyi-za-pidsumkami-vizitu-premye-92781>

²⁴ Ministry of External Affairs of India, India-Poland Joint Statement "Establishment of Strategic Partnership", Media Center MEA, 22.08.2024, <https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/38201/India+Poland+Joint+Statement++Establishment+of+Strategic+Partnership>

²⁵ Observer Research Foundation, Modi's Diplomatic Push | Strategic Moves in Central and Eastern Europe, YouTube, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9imRzM5RNSg>

²⁶ Ministry of External Affairs of India, Joint Statement: India-Czechia Strategic Partnership On Innovation, Media Center MEA, 10.01.2024, <https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/37502/Joint+Statement+IndiaCzechia+Strategic+Partnership+On+Innovation>

²⁷ President Zelensky proposes India among few Global South countries for hosting second Ukraine peace summit, The Hindu, 24.08.2024, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/zelensky-proposes-india-for-hosting-second-ukraine-peace-summit/article68560221.ece>

- **Economically**, it underlined the necessity to finally hold the 7th meeting of the intergovernmental Ukraine—India Commission. As the last 6th meeting was held in 2018, the goal was set to hold the 7th meeting by the end of 2024. Yet it was not reached.

Also, the agreement stressed *“the importance of simplifying the business environment for mutual economic activity and investment”*. As Ukraine will need more investments for the post-war restoration, simplifying the business environment will be a necessary step.

- It also recognised *“cooperation in the **pharmaceutical sector** as one of the strongest pillars of the partnership”*.

The four other bilateral agreements were signed in this sphere in 2024. One of them is the Memorandum of Understanding between the State Service of Ukraine on Medications and Drug Control and the Central Drug Standards Control Organisation of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of India on Cooperation in the Field of Medicines Regulation²⁸. Traditionally, pharmaceutical products are among the biggest export items from India to Ukraine (products for \$200,5 million were imported in 2024, for \$184,5 million in 2023). Indian pharmaceutical companies actively work in Ukraine. They have formed the Indian Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association²⁹ in Kyiv, which allows them to promote collective interests. Among the members of the Association are such big players in the global pharmaceutical market as Dr. Reddy's, Abryl Pharm, Dia Pharma Ltd, Sun Pharma etc. Another important Indian pharmaceutical company is Kusum Pharm, which has its Ukrainian manufactories in Sumy³⁰, close to the frontline and is also active in humanitarian aid for those who, more than others, feel the burden of the war.

As a next step after signing the memorandum, the Ukrainian delegation of the Ministry of Healthcare and the State Service of Ukraine on Medications and Drug Control visited India in October 2024. It took part in the International Conference of Drug Regulatory Authorities, which in 2024 was held in New Delhi. On the sidelines of the conference, the head of the State Service of Ukraine on Medications and Drug Control, Roman Isayenko, met Drug Controller General of India, Dr. Rajeev Singh Raghuvanshi³¹.

²⁸ Меморандум про взаєморозуміння між Державною службою України з лікарських засобів та контролю за наркотиками та Центральною організацією з контролю за стандартами лікарських засобів міністерства здоров'я та сімейного добробуту уряду Індії, Верховна Рада України, 23.08.2024, https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/356_003-24#Text

²⁹ Індійські фармкомпанії продовжують підтримувати Україну, IPMA, 2024, <https://www.ipma.ua/news/members/1713/>

³⁰ І. Левицька, Як міжнародна фармкомпанія з власним виробництвом в Україні допомагає українцям наблизити перемогу, Gazeta.ua, 2024, <http://projects.gazeta.ua/dopomoga-1178395>

³¹ Індію відвідала офіційна делегація МОЗ України та Держлікслужби, Посольство України в Республіці Індія, 21.10.2024, <https://india.mfa.gov.ua/news/indiyu-vidvidala-oficijna-delegaciya-moz-ukrayini-ta-derzhliksluzhbi>

- **Agriculture** was also noted as a sphere where India and Ukraine have strong ties.

Additional Agreement on Agriculture and Food Industry was signed during the visit. According to the agreement³², Ukraine and India focus their cooperation not only on trade but also on scientific exchange in the field of agriculture, exchange of experience and mutual research. Sunflower oil stays the biggest export item from Ukraine to India (in 2024, export cost \$711 million (almost 14% of all sunflower oil export of Ukraine), twice more than in 2023 (\$337 million), but still less than in pre-war 2021 – \$1,91 billion).

- **Defence cooperation** was also outlined in the agreement with the commitment to hold the second meeting of the Joint Ukrainian-Indian Working Group on Military-Technical Cooperation.

Mil-Tec has been an important dimension for cooperation since the Soviet period, especially with Ukrainian gas turbines produced by the Zorya-Mashproekt complex in Mykolaiv, a necessity for the Indian Navy. In 2025, Ukraine has also restored its full participation in the largest aerospace and defence exhibition in Asia, "Aero India 2025". With an enormous battleground experience, which includes using both old Soviet-style as well as modern technological solutions, Ukraine can share its perspective on the effectiveness of different types of warfare in modern conflicts. Moreover, Ukrainian forces are deploying (though still limited) AI technologies on the battleground with the goal of removing warfighters from direct combat and replacing them with autonomous unmanned systems,³³ which makes their experience more valuable to share.

- *The final points of the Agreement were devoted to **culture and people-to-people contacts**.*

This part of cooperation between the two states was rather neglected over the last thirty years. Therefore, the first inaugural meeting of the working group on cultural cooperation took place on the eve of the Indian PM's visit on August 20, 2024. India and Ukraine signed the Programme of Cultural Cooperation between the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine and the Ministry of Culture of the Government of the Republic of India for 2024-2028³⁴. The programme underlines the parties' desire to expand cultural exchange in various fields. In the bilateral agreement, scholarships for scholars and artists

³² Угода між Урядом України та Урядом Республіки Індія про співпрацю у галузях сільського господарства та харчової промисловості, Верховна Рада України, 23.08.2024, https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/356_001-24#Text

³³ К. Bondar, Ukraine's Future Vision and Current Capabilities for Waging AI-Enabled Autonomous Warfare, CSIS, 06.03.2025, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/ukraines-future-vision-and-current-capabilities-waging-ai-enabled-autonomous-war>

³⁴ Програма культурного співробітництва між Міністерством культури та інформаційної політики України та Міністерством культури Уряду Республіки Індія на 2024-2028 рр., Верховна Рада України, 23.08.2024, https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/356_002-24#Text

were suggested as a way to enhance people-to-people contacts and cultural exchange. Before the full-scale invasion, education was an important element of the cooperation between the countries, with over 18 thousand Indian students studying in Ukraine in 2021. Therefore, India and Ukraine “agreed to explore the possibility of opening branches of higher education institutions to meet the educational needs of citizens of both countries”.

Yet one document signed during the visit of PM Narendra Modi was a Memorandum of Understanding regarding **Indian humanitarian aid grant assistance** for the implementation of high-impact community development projects. According to the MoU, the capital cost of the project should not exceed \$1,5 million, and the projects “should relate chiefly to socioeconomic development, livelihood support, empowerment of women, child welfare, and facilitation of community life”³⁵. Grants awarded through the embassy of India in Ukraine will help war-affected communities to at least partially restore their normal functioning.

Besides that, several other important events took place. On March 29, 2024, Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba travelled to New Delhi. It was the first visit to India by the Ukrainian foreign minister since 2017. During the visit, the meeting of the Ukrainian-Indian intergovernmental commission was held for the first time since 2018. Though it was in an observatory format, it gave the push for the meetings of the mutual bilateral working groups:

- On trade and economic cooperation (online, May 15)
- on cooperation in education (online, August 9);
- on pharmaceuticals (online, August 14);
- the inaugural meeting of the working group on cultural cooperation (online, August 20).

³⁵ Memorandum of Understanding (mou) between the Government of the Republic of India and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine regarding Indian humanitarian grant assistance for implementation of high impact community development projects, Ministry of External Affairs of India, 23.08.2024, <https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/LegalTreatiesDoc/UK24B4512.pdf>

INDO-UKRAINIAN RELATIONS: HEADING TOWARDS THE NEW LEVEL

"I am very interested in increasing our trade turnover by 3 or 5 times. This is not much, to be honest. This is to return to our best times. That's what we want. We want, and we can do it. We will be open in all directions. Where the Indian side is in favour, we will increase each of the directions and will not block anything. I guarantee this."³⁶

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in the interview with Indian media, August 25, 2024.

Over the last year, Ukrainian leaders have stressed their deep interest in enhancing relations with India. Though the global environment is rather challenging these days, several spheres look promising for both countries.

Increasing economic cooperation through business investments

Indian **pharmaceutical companies** have been a strong pillar of bilateral cooperation for tens of years, and the best proof that the economy is a driver for boosting cooperation between the states. As Ukraine faces the existential challenges of war, there is a higher demand for pharmaceutical products, so there is room to expand that cooperation. Another example is an Indo-Ukrainian company, Parashar Industries³⁷, which from the small family business has become one of the world leaders in the production of innovative components for amputee **prosthetics**. At least 50 thousand Ukrainians lost their limbs during three years of war³⁸, so such manufacturers and their products will be in need in Ukraine in the next decades.

India has experience in post-conflict **housing reconstruction**³⁹ and one of the biggest construction industries in the world. As Ukraine will be in severe need of reconstructing its cities and will lack enough labour force for that, investments in this sphere look promising.

³⁶ Інтерв'ю Володимира Зеленського представникам індійських ЗМІ, Офіційний YouTube-канал Президента України, 25.08.2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bKyvfLvU3IA>

³⁷ D. Bezruchenko, P. Pavlov, Manufacturing in Two Shifts, Reporters, 08.05.2024, <https://reporters.media/en/manufacturing-in-two-shifts/>

³⁸ Zh. Bezpiatchuk, A. Gribanova, The woman helping amputees rebuild their lives in war-torn Ukraine, BBC News, 10.12.2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c0q0wvvyqzwd0>

³⁹ Gulshan Sachdeva, Indian Perspective on Ukraine's reconstruction, Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, 12.08.2024, <https://www.freiheit.org/south-asia/indian-perspective-ukraines-reconstruction>

The Ukrainian **IT sector** has been developing its presence in India, with the third Ukrainian company opening its R&D office in India in the last four years⁴⁰.

Nuclear safety and security dialogue

Just recently, a Russian drone attacked the Chernobyl nuclear reactor shield, risking to provoke a major nuclear incident. Earlier, Russia occupied the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant and targeted objects in close proximity to other NPPs in Ukraine. All these stressed that **ensuring nuclear and radiation safety** in Ukraine in the face of Russian military aggression is an urgent challenge for global nuclear security. Many researchers often mention the Indo-Pakistan experience as a relevant option for safeguarding civilian nuclear infrastructure in Ukraine.⁴¹ Still, there is a lack of understanding of how the Agreement signed between India and Pakistan in 1988 would work in the current environment of the full-scale war, especially with the challenges faced by Ukraine⁴².

Minister of Foreign Affairs of India, S. Jaishankar, during his talk in Chatham House on March 5, 2025, mentioned that the Ukrainian side approached Indians concerning the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. In November 2024, there was also a meeting between Ukrainian Minister of Energy German Galushchenko and India's Permanent Representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Shambhu Kumaran, on the issue of nuclear safety. India possesses valuable experience in the sphere of nuclear security, which, in cooperation with Ukraine, could serve the global benefit.

Ukraine and India need to enhance their understanding of each other and cultural dialogue

Therefore, the development of cooperation in the **sphere of culture** is an extremely necessary step, especially in the unstable geopolitical environment. Previous research⁴³ conducted jointly with the author of this paper shows that there is a need for Ukraine's enhanced stance vis-à-vis India. For that, it would be important for Ukraine to open its cultural centre or the representative office of the Ukrainian Institute in New Delhi.

⁴⁰ A. Kovalova, Ukrainian IT company N-iX opens a new R&D center in India, AIN.ua, 13.01.2025, <https://en.ain.ua/2025/01/13/n-ix-opens-a-new-rd-center-in-india/>

⁴¹ L. Rodriguez, L. Sukin, Russian Actions at Zaporizhzhia Show Need for Better Legal Protections of Nuclear Installations, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 28.10.2022, <https://web.archive.org/web/20240417213658/https://thebulletin.org/2022/10/russian-actions-at-zaporizhzhia-show-need-for-better-legal-protections-of-nuclear-installations/>

⁴² M. Kurando, Protecting Nuclear Facilities in Ukraine: Lessons from South Asia, Evropský Politický a Právní Diskurz, 2024, <https://eppd13.cz/wp-content/uploads/2024/2024-11-2/05.pdf>

⁴³ N. Bureiko, O. Vorozhbyt, Enhancing Ukrainian Voice in the World. Cultural Environment and Local Context: India (TBP)

Another step could be promoting Ukrainian studies within Indian universities. Indian students who previously studied in Ukraine could help build a deeper societal understanding between the nations. Also, it is important to look for options for Indian students to return to study in Ukraine, as this cooperation is beneficial for both sides. Therefore, as it was suggested in the bilateral agreement signed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the possibility of opening branches of higher education institutions should be considered.

Another important step is to present Ukraine and its cooperation with India (not only in the sphere of culture but especially there) as a long-term process that has not been started just 30 years ago. Therefore, Ukraine should remind older generations in India about previous positive experience of cooperation during the USSR times and finally show that the rich and positive Soviet legacy of relations with India is not just Russia's legacy as Moscow wants to portray it.

To understand each other better, both countries need **to expand their presence and cultural activities beyond the capitals**. This is what Ukraine has to do, taking into consideration Indian diversity and the tapestry of languages, religions, and cultural forms.

Reform of the United Nations

Over the last few years, India has become one of the leading voices for UN reform. According to the vision of New Delhi, the UN Security Council in its current form is not fit for the challenges of the 21st century⁴⁴. India calls to expand both permanent and non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council⁴⁵.

Ukraine is also a strong proponent of the Security Council reform and stresses the necessity to "restrict the use of "veto"⁴⁶ by a permanent member of the Security Council". Moreover, Ukraine aims to bring more light to the fact that Russia has illegally occupied the permanent seat which was granted to the USSR before it was dissolved.

Both nations could look for ways to cooperate on the issue, especially as such reform would contribute to the process of forming new global norms.

⁴⁴ UN 2024: India calls for change at UN as conflicts persist, The Hindu, 23.12.2024, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/un-2024-india-calls-for-change-at-un-as-conflicts-persist/article69017874.ece>

⁴⁵ India and United Nations, UN Reforms, Permanent Mission of India to the UN, <https://bit.ly/422HzAW>

⁴⁶ Statement by the delegation of Ukraine at the UNGA meeting on agenda item 122 "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the SC", Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the United Nations, 11.11.2024, <https://un.mfa.gov.ua/en/news/statement-delegation-ukraine-unga-meeting-agenda-item-122-question-equitable-representation-and-increase-membership-security-council-and-other-matters-related-sc>

CONCLUSIONS

Though Ukraine has been fighting in the existential war for the fourth year already, it also preserves an active stance in international relations and even improves cooperation on the tracks that were rather neglected earlier. Indo-Ukrainian bilateral relations have witnessed ups and downs over the last 30 years. However, in political terms (though India still preserves "strategic neutrality" in the Russo-Ukraine war), they are at the moment when we could see major positive developments.

With the 2024 historic visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Ukraine, Kyiv and New Delhi reached important momentum for the political level of the relations between the nations. During the visit, a comprehensive bilateral agreement was signed that consolidated the desire of both countries to achieve a strategic level of partnership. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also reaffirmed India's readiness to contribute to stable peace in Ukraine.

The signed agreement outlines the key areas of cooperation that could be developed as "islands of stability" for both nations in an extremely volatile global political environment.

For both India and Ukraine, boosting economic cooperation could bring benefits. There are already businesses (e.g. Indian pharmaceutical companies in Ukraine) that are good examples of how business and economic investments develop bilateral cooperation between the countries.

Due to previous Indo-Pakistan wars and conflicts, India has vast experience in preserving the safety of civil nuclear infrastructure. Since the full-scale invasion of Russia, the safety of nuclear civil infrastructure in Ukraine is also an urgent issue. Working on the challenges Ukraine faces now in that direction, both nations can come up with a necessary, updated solution which could later serve the global benefit.

Developing cooperation in the sphere of culture is necessary to improve understanding between both countries.

Finally, reform of the UN is where both countries could also find a stable ground to cooperate.

With financial support of



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RENAISSANCE
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Foreign Policy Council Ukrainian Prism
1 M. Kotsyubynski St. Office 202, Kyiv, 01054
Ukraine
info@prismua.org
www.prismua.org