India Ukraine Bilateral Relationship

Why in News?

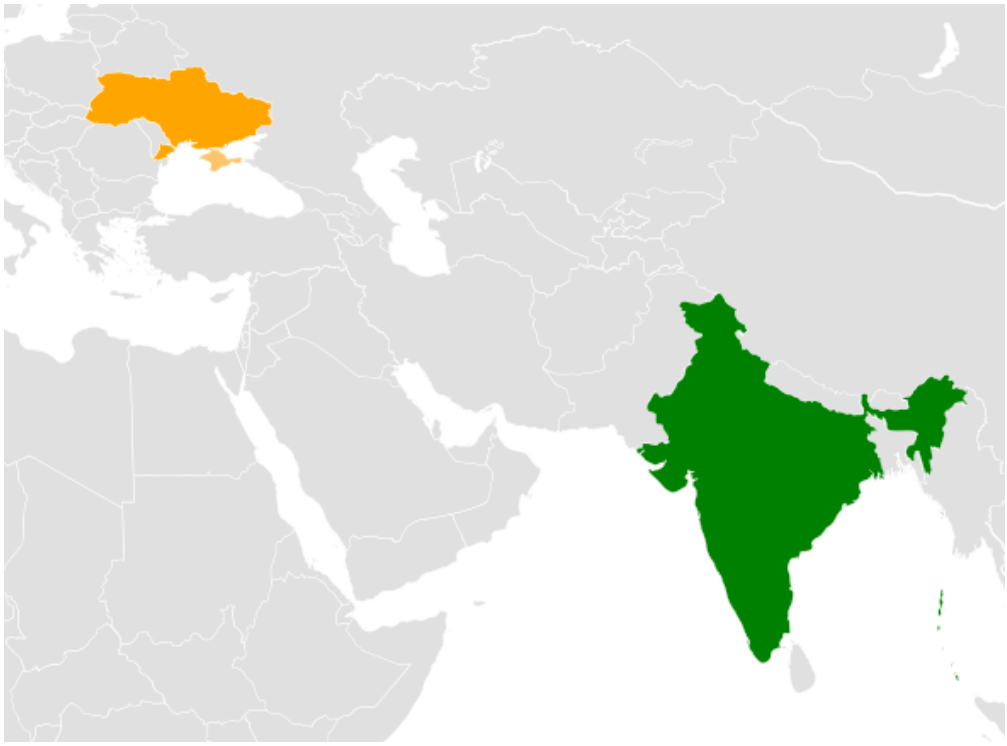
Indian Prime Minister has recently visited Ukraine and met his counterpart.

What are the pillars of the India Ukraine relationship?

- India has an extensive bilateral relationship with Ukraine, spanning all spheres of cooperation.
- **Historical ties**
  - **1991**- India recognized Ukraine
  - **1992**- Diplomatic relations were established
  - **2012**- Comprehensive partnership between Ukraine and India was adopted
- **Diplomatic relations**- There have been three Presidential level visits from Ukraine to India (1992, 2002 and 2012).
- From India, Presidential visit had been in 1993 and 2005.

The 2024 visit of Indian Prime Minister to Ukraine is the first ever visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Ukraine, since diplomatic relations were established between the two countries in the year 1992.

- In the recent past, Indian and Ukraine PM had meeting on the side-lines of COP26 Summit in 2019, G7 Summit in 2023 (in Hiroshima) and 2024 (in Apulia) respectively.
- ***Indian-Ukrainian Intergovernmental Commission*** (IGC) was signed in 1994 to build stronger cooperation on trade, economic, scientific, technical, industrial and cultural aspects.



- **Defence** – Ukraine has been a *source of military technology and equipment for India* since its independence including for procurement of spares and equipment.
- A *Defence Cooperation Agreement* was signed in 2012.
- **Science and Technology** - An agreement on co-operation in the fields of S&T was signed *initially in 1992 and renewed in 2012*.
    - In 2018, both sides agreed to support *10 fields* in metals & material sciences, computational science, biological sciences biological sciences among others.
- **Education** – India accounted for the largest share of foreign students studying in Ukraine.
    - There were around 22,700 Indian students in Ukraine in the 2021-22 academic session and *a total of about 2000* Indian students are enrolled currently.
- **Bilateral Trade** - Bilateral trade between the two countries had grown steadily to reaching US$ 3.386 billion in 2021-22.



- **Communication** – The agreement on *visa exemption* for the diplomatic passport holders was signed in 2011.
- India has included Ukraine in the *e-Visa Scheme in 2014*.

- **Humanitarian Assistance** - India was among the first countries to provide humanitarian assistance to Ukraine after the breakout of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine in February 2022.
    - Indian Pharmaceutical Companies have donated about USD *10 million worth of medical aid & financial* assistance.
- **Culture** - A *Ukrainian Association of Ayurveda and Yoga* (UAAY) was formed as a legal entity in 2018.
- The local Indian community had formed an association called *'India Club'* which celebrates Indian festivals & organise cultural events.

A Statue of Mahatma Gandhi was inaugurated in Kyiv in 2020. The area in the park around the statue has been named the "Oasis of Peace".

What are the recent developments?

- During the recent visit of Prime Minister of India to Ukraine, India-Ukraine Joint Statement was released.
- **Elevating partnerships** – Aiming to elevate comprehensive partnership *to a strategic partnership* in the future.
- **Economy** - Enhancing the *ease of doing business* and encouraging engagement to *explore joint projects*, collaborations, and ventures.
- **Pharma** – Cooperation on drugs and pharmaceuticals, including training and sharing of best practices.
    - MoU on cooperation in the field of Medical Products regulation was signed.
- **Agriculture** – Enhancing bilateral interaction and *market access* for agriculture on the basis of strengths in complementary areas.
    - Agreement on cooperation in the fields of Agriculture and Food Industry was signed in 2024.
- **Defence Cooperation** - Joint collaborations and partnerships for manufacturing in India and cooperation in emerging areas.
    - 2nd meeting of the Indian-Ukrainian Joint Working Group on Military-Technical Cooperation, to be held in India.
- **Culture** – A bilateral Programme of *Cultural Cooperation for the years 2024-2028* for promoting of cultural exchanges and cooperation in the fields of theatre, music, fine arts, literature, library and museum affairs.
- **People-to-people ties** – Sustaining and further expanding people-to-people and cultural exchanges, including through
    - *Scholarships* offered under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation programme
    - The General *Cultural Scholarship Scheme* of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations.
- **Education** – They agreed to explore the possibility of *mutual opening of branches of higher education institutions* to meet the educational needs of citizens of both countries.
- **Promoting global peace** - Cooperation in *upholding principles of international law*, including the UN Charter, such as respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty of

states.
    - India has attended the *Summit on Peace* in Ukraine, held in Birkenstock, Switzerland in 2024 on peaceful resolution through dialogue and diplomacy.
- **Global food security –** Both appreciated various efforts to ensure global food security, *like Ukrainian humanitarian grain initiative*.
- They also emphasized on uninterrupted & unhindered supply of *agricultural products to global markets*, mainly in Asia and Africa.

What are the challenges in the relationship?

- **Reduction in bilateral trade** – A significant reduction in the annual bilateral trade in goods since the year 2022 due to the challenges related to the ongoing war.
- **India-Russia relationship** - India has had long-standing bilateral relations with first the Soviet Union and then the Russian Federation, marked by strong defence ties.
- **Ukraine peace process** - India remains distant in any peace process that does not involve bringing Russia and Ukraine to the table for talks.
- It had disassociated itself from the Swiss peace summit to end Russia Ukraine War.

Recent efforts for Ukraine-Russia peace process includes the Black Sea Grain Initiative, the IAEA effort, on nuclear safety at the Zaporizhzhia power plant and the latest exchange of Russian and Ukrainian prisoners.

What lies ahead?

- India must articulate its own principles for a ceasefire compromise and lasting peace.
- India will need to recast itself in a more unbiased image in the bilateral relationship.
- Explore strategic partnerships with Ukraine, particularly in the realm of defence manufacturing.

References

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