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INDIA-UKRAINE: PARTNERS IN PROGRESS

To say that India and Ukraine have historic, close and friendly relationship is a cliché, but the fact remains that there are numerous evidences about connections between these two territories many millennia ago. Experts have found many similarities between the languages of the two lands, for example Slavik/Ukrainian and Sanskrit languages, customs and practices in rural Ukraine and rural India. Some of the latest archaeological research links the population living in ancient Ukrainian land with those who were part of the “Aryan” or “Indo-Aryan”.

While both India and Ukraine have suffered centuries of turbulence and foreign rule, India came into its own again in 1947 while Ukraine got its independence in 1991. Government of India recognized the Republic of Ukraine as a sovereign independent country in December 1991. The Embassy of India in Kyiv was established in May 1992 while Ukraine opened its Mission in New Delhi in February 1993.

In the last 26 years, India and Ukraine have exchanged numerous high level and working level visits and have established a wide network of MoUs/agreements covering almost all important aspects of bilateral relations. These 26 years have also been the period when Indian economy was opened up and has made some noteworthy progress. Today, India is the fastest growing large economy of the world.

Indian economic growth has also left its mark on India-Ukraine relationships. Rising income levels in India ensure a huge market for Ukrainian products and services. Let us take a more detailed look at the possibilities that a huge population of nearly 1.3 billion people in India which adds 22 million people or half of Ukraine every year, can be exploited for business by Ukraine. It is important to note that it provides a win-win situation for both India and Ukraine.

Nearly 30% of Indian population, i.e., nearly 390 million people in India are as rich as Americans or Europeans. This population is potential tourist that travels worldwide with family and friends. Indians are known to be the second largest spenders as tourists. Even if we assume that 0.01% of the touristic population of India visits Ukraine every year, and each of these tourist spends nearly US\$ 1000 on an average, annual income for Ukraine from Indian tourists will be nearly US\$ 39 million.



Прес-конференція в медіа-центрі ГДІП, присвячена проведенню Міжнародного дня йоги. Надзвичайний і Повноважний Посол Індії пан Манодж Кумар Бхарті з дружиною пані Анамікою Бхарті, Павло Кривонос, генеральний директор ДП "ГДІП"

Press conference at the GDIP Media-Center regarding the organization of International Day of Yoga. The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of India Mr. Manoj Kumar Bharti with his wife Mrs. Anamika Bharti, and Pavlo Kryvonos, Director-General of "GDIP" SE

Nearly half of Indian population or 650 million people in India are less than 25 years of age. This is why India is known as world's youngest country. However, this huge population needs to be given education, skills and jobs. India has a huge network of institutions, universities and training centres but even then, the number of young people coming out of schools every year is so high that invariably many students go abroad for studies. Ukraine offers an excellent opportunity for Indian students for studies in professional courses. Today, there are nearly 11000 Indian students studying in Ukraine which is the largest number of students from any other country studying in Ukraine. Each student spends nearly US\$ 5000, on an average, on tuition fees, boarding and lodging and personal expenses every year. This means, Ukraine is already earning annually US\$ 55 million by providing education to the Indian students. There is potential for significant growth in this area – it is possible to see nearly 40000 Indian students studying in Ukraine at any particular time. In that case, Ukraine will earn nearly US\$ 200 million just by providing education to the Indian students.

Thirdly, most of the Indian population eats vegetarian food. Even those Indians who are called non-vegetarian mostly eat vegetarian food on a daily basis. The most important source of protein for the vegetarians is pulses. In India, people eat 13–14 different kind of pulses and beans. On average, India imports US\$ 2 billion worth of pulses every year from abroad as it is unable to meet the growing domestic requirement. Almost half of this import comes from Canada. However, Ukraine has a better agricultural land than Canada, better agricultural climate than Canada, it is less than half the distance from Canada. It is only logical for Ukrainian farmers to look at this huge requirement in India, grow pulses for the Indian consumption and export it to India.

There is a deep awareness in Ukraine now about pulse market of India. Pulse Growers' Association of Ukraine and the Ministry of Agrarian Policy have worked purposefully to look at the possibilities of meeting the requirements of Indian market for pulses. A big business delegation led by two Deputy Ministers of Ministry of Economy and Trade as well as Ministry of Agrarian Policy visited India in November 2017 and had a number of useful interactions with the Indian business community. Many seminars and conferences have been organized recently and the message has gone to a wider section of farmers and cultivators in Ukraine to switch to pulse farming. This has an additional advantage of nitrogen fixation of land which gets unusable after a crop of sunflower. For the first time, pulse was exported to India from Ukraine in 2017. It is expected that the volume will grow significantly in 2018 and in coming years.

These are just a few examples where a lot of work has happened in the near past. Progress has been made on all these fronts. After the Indian nationals received visa-on-arrival facility in April 2017, the tourist arrival from India has already seen a remarkable jump. As per the record from the Border Immigration authorities of Ukraine, total number of arrival from India in 2016 was nearly 19500. This figure jumped to 29400 in the year of 2017. Visa-on-arrival facility has not only helped Indian tourists to experience the charms of Ukraine, it has already drawn the attention of the Indian film industry. Two Indian films have already been shot in Ukraine in the last one year. One of them, a Telugu film, "Winner" has been shown in India in May 2017. These are significant developments because shooting of Indian films on a new location is likely to boost the number of Indian tourist manifold to that country.

There is another fallout of the visa-on-arrival facility given to the Indians. In the academic session starting in September 2017, more than 4000 Indian students have been admitted to the universities in Ukraine. It was the first time that parents of many of these new students came with their children to Ukraine and saw the university and the excellent educational facilities available in Ukraine. This is the best advertisement that Ukraine can hope to get in India. Most of these parents, if impressed with Ukraine, will be speaking highly

of their experience to hundreds of friends and relatives in India and encourage them to send their children for studies at the higher education establishments to Ukraine.

India and Ukraine trade relationship is already quite significant, which is not so obvious to many Ukrainians however. In 2017, the total volume of bilateral trade was nearly US\$ 2.8 billion. India was Ukraine's 9th largest trading partner. However, Ukraine's export to India was nearly US\$ 2.25 billion and India was Ukraine's fifth largest export destination. More significantly, Ukraine's trade balance with India was nearly US\$ 1.67 billion which was the second largest positive trade balance for Ukraine with any country.

Talking of economic linkages, as indicated above, there are a number of areas where further progress can be made. India is already the largest recipient of Ukrainian sunflower oil worth nearly US\$ 1.9 billion. However, there is still space for more. High quality engineering products particularly those which require advance metallurgy are a niche area where a focused approach will work.

On the other hand, import of pharmaceutical products from India is yet to achieve its full potential. Good quality, tested and well-regulated pharmaceutical products need to be imported in Ukraine in much larger quantities because this will also provide another win-win situation. Let us take a simple example. If good quality pharmaceutical products worth US\$ 100 are imported from India to Ukraine, Ukraine saves nearly US\$ 300 because if the same products are imported from Europe or America, Ukraine will have to pay nearly US\$ 400. There are a number of life threatening diseases like Hepatitis B and C and Tuberculosis where the cost of treatment from Europe is nearly ten times higher than the cost of treatment obtained from India.

There is another direction in the field of medical treatment where there is a need for better understanding in Ukraine. Ayurveda is one of the most ancient system of codified natural treatment. This well-established science of medication is also approved and advocated by the World Health Organisation (WHO). While there is a wide amount of awareness of Ayurvedic treatment and medicines at the level of common people in Ukraine, the Government of Ukraine is not supporting the system of traditional medicine. There is a need to understand the wider significance of Ayurvedic treatment which provides well codified and harmonized system of tested medical practice at a much cheaper cost to the common population in Ukraine. Ayurveda has the capability not only to deal with physical diseases but also diseases related to mental instability, stress, war-related psychological effects among many others. There is a need to open up the mind and the thinking process to accept new ideas and realise its usefulness.

The Embassy of India has been promoting this concept by organizing many seminars on Ayurveda. Recently, a delegation of Indian companies dealing with Ayurveda practices and medicines visited Ukraine and interacted with a large

number of Ukrainian businessmen, medical practitioners and tour operators. There is a possibility of opening a large number of wellness centres based on Ayurvedic practices in Ukraine. Talking of just import of Ayurvedic medicines, a potential for nearly US\$ 350 million has been projected. It is important to understand that this import of US\$ 350 million will offset the need to import nearly US\$ 3.5 billion worth of allopathic medicines into Ukraine. The modern system of medicine and surgery should be left to emergency cases. All other treatments have a perfect and effective Ayurvedic alternative.

There is also a wide acceptability of Indian culture, tradition and philosophy in Ukraine. Thousands of people assemble every year to take part in yoga festivals and yoga related activities organized by various yoga schools and yoga associations. A celebration to observe the 3rd International Day of Yoga named “Marathon without rush” was organized by the Indian Embassy in June 2017. This event was attended by more than 4500 people and became a Ukrainian record. This also was judged the 2nd best event for the European Excellence Award for sports activities in 2017.

A call for celebrating Holi festival draws tens and thousands of people every year. There are numerous schools in Kyiv and other provincial capital towns in Ukraine teaching Indian classical and popular Bollywood dance to children of all ages. A festival of Indian dances organized every year in October – November draws nearly 350 participants from all over Ukraine. Nearly 26000 tourists from Ukraine visited India, almost half of them go for spiritual/Ayurveda tourism. This number is sure to increase in the coming years. It is heartening to note that considering the potential of touristic exchange between our two countries, Ukrainian International Airlines has decided to start a direct air linkage from Kyiv to Delhi from 01 May 2018. The touristic traffic between India and Ukraine which is currently nearly 60000 is bound to increase at a rapid pace in the coming years.

The IMF, World Bank and other credit rating agencies of the world predict that India will continue to be the world’s fastest growing economy for the next 10 years. Towards this end, Government of India has made a number of policies aimed at maintaining and increasing the pace of economic development in the coming years. Some of these initiatives including “Make-in-India”, “100 Smart Cities” project, “Industrial Corridors” project, “Digital India”, “Startup India”, as well as “Clean India” project require participation from many foreign countries. Ukraine is well-placed to take part in many of these activities as a provider of technology, scientific knowledge and personnel as well as investment to take maximum benefit from the economic activities being undertaken in India. Apart from a role for technology driven companies, there are huge prospects for experts in the field of metallurgy engineering, chemical engineering and other branches of industry to come to India and contribute to the progress and maximize their own benefits.

Government of India provides nearly 20 scholarships under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme in which 65 different areas of professional training are being given to Ukrainian nationals. These training courses include proficiency in English language, IT training, audit and finance, leadership training, rural governance, e-governance, etc among many others. Professionals with minimum five years of work experience should avail of these scholarships. The details of these courses and application forms can be taken from the Embassy's website: <http://embassyofindiaukraine.in>. Government of India also provides additional scholarships for learning Indian classical dances, music, Ayurveda and Hindi every year. All these information is available at the Indian Embassy's website and needs to be utilized by Ukrainian citizens.



Виконавиця індійського класичного танцю під час проведення фестивалю йоги

Performer of Indian classic dance during the Yoga Festival

Indian Embassy keeps organizing a large number of activities just to promote awareness of India and possibilities of doing business with India in various cities in Ukraine. Festivals of India are regularly organized in cities like Ternopil, Vinnytsia, Lviv, Sumy, Kharkiv and other cities. Indian film festivals are also part of such festival of India. All groups are encouraged to get in touch with the Indian Embassy to bring up project of such nature to life. An Indian Cultural Centre has been operational in the Indian Embassy for the last three months and a number of coaching classes to learn classical dance, Hindi, Sanskrit, Indian vocal classical music, yoga and Ayurveda are being run. An Indian film is shown every Friday evening in the Indian Cultural Center.

At the end, it needs to be emphasized that the present level of India-Ukraine relationship and the continuing trend of its intensification in the last couple of years, presents an extremely bright future in the days ahead. Embassy of India in Kyiv will continue to play its role more and more effectively in this direction.