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INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY IN KAZAKHSTAN: ANALYSIS OF COOPERATION POTENTIAL

India is transforming its foreign policy in line with strengthening economic and political profile. The role and political ambitions of its Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, in advocating these changes are crucial. Among the directions he shifted in India's foreign policy approach was to a Central Asian region, which was demonstrated during Modi's 'historic' tour to all five Central Asian states in summer 2015. The tour was perceived as a new chapter of engagement between India and Central Asia.

Kazakhstan, being the largest trading partner in the region and a strategic partner, had high hopes for those advancements. In addition to traditional rhetoric about historical and cultural ties, India's modest engagement with Kazakhstan awaited new levels of cooperation, especially given the potential of India's economy and population. However, the analysis shows that there is still a limited capacity for economic interaction between India and Kazakhstan.

The paper aims to investigate how India's foreign policy towards Kazakhstan has evolved since Prime Minister Narendra Modi was elected in 2014, as well as the economic outcomes of these developments. First, the paper reveals India's foreign policy under Prime Minister Modi. Then the paper focuses on India's bilateral relations with Kazakhstan, covering regional and bilateral political mechanisms of cooperation. Further, the paper focuses on economic indicators, analysing bilateral trade and investment ties, and proposing future areas of cooperation. In conclusion, the paper summarises the present India-Kazakhstan relations and their potential for widening their cooperation.

Key words: India, Kazakhstan, India-Kazakhstan relations, trade, investment.

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Үндістанның Қазақстандағы сыртқы саясаты: ынтымақтастықтың әлеуетін талдау

Үндістан экономикалық және саяси профилінің нығаюына сәйкес сыртқы саясатын өзгертуде. Бұл өзгерістер енгізуде премьер-министр Нарендра Модидің рөлі мен саяси амбициялары өте маңызды. Үндістанның сыртқы саяси көзқарасындағы өзгерген бағыттардың қатарында Модидің 2015 жылдың жазында Орталық Азияның барлық бес мемлекетіне жасаған «тарихи» сапары кіреді. Бұл турне Үндістан мен Орталық Азия арасындағы қарым-қатынастың жаңа тарауы ретінде қабылданды.

Қазақстан Үндістанның аймақтағы ең ірі сауда және стратегиялық серіктесі бола отырып, бұл жетістіктерге үлкен үміт артты. Үндістанның Қазақстанмен қарым-қатынастары тарихи және мәдени байланыстар туралы дәстүрлі риторикаға қоса, Үндістан экономикасы мен халқының әлеуетін ескере отырып, ынтымақтастықтың жаңа деңгейлерін күтті. Дегенмен, талдау Үндістан мен Қазақстан арасындағы экономикалық өзара іс-қимыл мүмкіндіктері әлі де шектеулі қолданылатыны көрсетеді.

Бұл мақала 2014 жылы премьер-министр Нарендра Модиді сайланғаннан бері Үндістанның Қазақстанға қатысты сыртқы саясаты дамуын, сондай-ақ экономикалық нәтижелерін зерттеуге бағытталған. Біріншіден, мақала премьер-министр Модидің кезіндегі Үндістанның сыртқы саясатын ашады. Содан кейін Үндістанның Қазақстанмен екі жақты қарым-қатынасына назар аударады, ынтымақтастықтың аймақтық және екіжақты саяси механизмдерін қамтиды. Әрі қарай, мақала экономикалық көрсеткіштерге, екіжақты сауда және инвестициялық байланыстарды талдауға және ынтымақтастықтың болашақ бағыттарын ұсынуға бағытталған. Қорытындысында, мақала Үндістан мен Қазақстан арасындағы қазіргі қарым-қатынастарды және олардың ынтымақтастығын кеңейту үшін әлеуеттерін қарастырады.

Түйін сөздер: Үндістан, Қазақстан, Үндістан-Қазақстан қатынастары, сауда, инвестиция.

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Внешняя политика Индии в Казахстане: анализ потенциала сотрудничества

Индия трансформирует внешнюю политику в соответствии с укреплением своего экономического и политического профиля. Роль и политические амбиции премьер-министра Нарендры Моди в продвижении данных изменений имеют решающее значение. Среди областей, которые он изменил во внешнеполитическом подходе Индии – Центральноазиатский регион, которое было продемонстрировано во время «исторического» турне Моди по всем пяти государствам Центральной Азии летом 2015 года. Турне был воспринят как новая глава взаимодействия между Индией и Центральной Азией.

Казахстан, будучи стратегическим и крупнейшим торговым партнером в регионе, возлагал большие надежды на эти достижения. Помимо традиционной риторики об исторических и культурных связях, скромное взаимодействие Индии с Казахстаном ожидало нового уровня сотрудничества, особенно с учетом потенциала индийской экономики и населения. Однако, как показывает анализ, возможности экономического взаимодействия между Индией и Казахстаном по-прежнему ограничены.

Целью статьи является исследование развития внешней политики Индии в отношении Казахстана с момента избрания премьер-министром Нарендры Моди в 2014 году, а также экономические последствия этих событий. Сначала, в статье раскрывается внешняя политика Индии при премьер-министре Моди. Далее основное внимание уделяется двусторонним отношениям Индии с Казахстаном, охватывающим региональные и двусторонние политические механизмы сотрудничества. Отдельное внимание уделяется экономическим показателям, анализу двусторонних торговых и инвестиционных связей и рекомендациям будущих направлений сотрудничества. В заключении обобщаются текущие индийско-казахстанские отношения и их потенциал для расширения сотрудничества.

Ключевые слова: Индия, Казахстан, индийско-казахстанские отношения, торговля, инвестиции.

Introduction

India is recognised as one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. Its economic potential is estimated to become the third-largest economy by 2027 and the most developed nation by 2047 (Majumdar, 2023). It is already recognised as the most populous country in the world (UN DESA, 2023). Its political aspirations are acknowledged with its growing political intentions in global governance, as seen in its recent G20 presidency, where it aims to “become the voice of the Global South that is otherwise under-represented in such forums” (Sharma, 2022). India’s foreign strategy has been advocating itself as a defender of the developing world by addressing the concerns of the emerging nations in the global governance platforms.

In line with strengthening economic and political profile, India is transforming its foreign policy from the long-standing traditional policy of non-alignment to ‘multi-alignment’, which aspires to more engagement in international affairs, and India’s stance to be “a leading power rather than just a balancing power”

(Jaishankar, 2020). India’s growing prosperity, combined with the exceptional dynamism and individual aspirations of its Prime Minister Narendra Modi, enabled the Indian government to advance more optimistic policies for India’s development and a firm foreign policy position.

The role and political ambitions of its Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, in advocating these changes are crucial. Since his first election in 2014, he has been pushing his muscular foreign policy. Among the directions he shifted in India’s foreign policy approach was to a Central Asian region, which was demonstrated with Modi’s ‘historic’ tour to all five Central Asian states in summer 2015. The tour was perceived as a new chapter of engagement between India and Central Asia.

Kazakhstan, being the largest trading partner in the region and strategic partner, had high hopes for those advancements. In addition to traditional rhetoric about historical and cultural ties, India’s modest engagement with Kazakhstan awaited new levels of cooperation, especially given the potential of India’s economy and population. However, the data indicates that there is still a limited capacity for

economic interaction between India and Kazakhstan. Namely, India's share in Kazakhstan's total trade comprised only 0.41% in 2022. India ranked 11th in a list of markets for Kazakhstan's exports and 13th in the list of top importers (International Trade Centre (ITC), 2023). Underdeveloped transport infrastructure, lack of direct connectivity due to the hostility of Pakistan and China in borders, and Iran's limited capabilities due to sanctions are usually mentioned as major challenges for enhancing trade cooperation.

The paper aims to investigate how India's foreign policy towards Kazakhstan has evolved since Prime Minister Narendra Modi was elected in 2014, as well as the economic outcomes of these developments. First, the paper reveals India's foreign policy under Prime Minister Modi. Then the paper focuses on India's bilateral relations with Kazakhstan, covering regional and bilateral political mechanisms of cooperation. Further, the paper focuses on economic indicators, analysing bilateral trade and investment ties, and proposing future areas of cooperation. In conclusion, the paper summarises the present India-Kazakhstan relations and their potential for widening their cooperation.

Methodological Anchor

Acknowledging the complexity and importance of research in studying bilateral relations, the article follows a holistic perspective that combines various dynamic processes of bilateral engagement. It allows for the opening of fresh perspectives on bilateral relations, centred on the dynamic-relational transaction processes embedded in the global environment (Ludwig, 2021). By understanding driving forces, processes and dynamics of bilateral cooperation, the article seeks to unpack fresh outputs to the present engagement between India and Kazakhstan.

The research is based on the critical survey of the existing literature on India-Kazakhstan relations and India's ties with Central Asian region. Through the critical survey, the article revealed the mainstream rhetoric of bilateral cooperation that further allowed to gauge the challenges and prospects of cooperation.

For the economic analysis, the article utilised the statistical analysis of total trade dynamics between India and Kazakhstan. The product-based analysis allowed for determining the structure of bilateral trade and provided a framework for examining the likelihood of new products appearing in a mutual trade.

India's Foreign Policy Approaches

India has been using its rising political and economic power to spread its influence around the globe. India's economy, which has grown steadily over the past decades, has given Modi the ability to enact more upbeat, development-oriented policies. With transformative foreign policy, Modi made a name for himself as a global leader and policy entrepreneur (Muratbekova, 2022).

Since Narendra Modi's elevation to the prime ministership in May 2014, his foreign policy shifted towards a 'multi-alignment' strategy that differs from the previous strategies of 'non-alignment' and subsequent 'strategic autonomy'. The multi-alignment strategy is believed to be the most appropriate way to advance India's interests in an increasingly unpredictable global environment. The strategy has three main components, such as expanding India's participation in international organisations; forming strategic alliances on a bilateral basis; and broadening its opportunities by protecting its interests while lowering the possibility of a deterioration (Hall, 2016). Further this strategy was clarified by Minister of External Affairs Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, who already made a significant contribution to the advancement of concepts and strategies in India's foreign policy. He believes, that "the issue is not whether India will continue rising; that vector is reasonably assured. The question is how to do so optimally in an era of greater uncertainty", hence reaffirming India's aspirations to lead in the multipolar world (Jaishankar, 2020).

Worth mentioning, India's foreign policy has been built around three concentric circles: the immediate neighbourhood, which places the highest priority; the extended neighbourhood, comprising South Asia, Indo-Pacific, South-East Asia, West Asia, and Central Asia, where India tries to maintain its interests and balance the influence of the powers; and the rest of the world, where India envisions establishing itself as a major global actor. At present, due to its firm belief in India's rising success, Indian foreign establishment is increasingly focusing on the third circle (Scott, 2011).

Nevertheless, it is not as straightforward as it appears because India is a well-known paradox in the international system. While having sufficient reasons for being optimistic about its global aspirations, India is still facing huge challenges both at home and abroad (Stuenkel, 2012). Despite significant advances and attempts to position itself as the leader of the Global South, India continues to struggle with its inability to exert regional, let alone global, leadership.

These are implied for India's strategy in Eurasia and particularly in Central Asian region, where India lacks the ability to create a coherent vision of global order that would set it apart from the other players in the regional "new great game" (Kavalski, 2019). Namely, it was demonstrated during the past Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit under the Indian presidency in July 2023, when India decided to hold the summit in an online format. Given that Central Asian states are placed within the core of the SCO, the Indian government, instead of using its opportunity to advance its positions in the SCO and in the region, has decided to focus on its G20 summit instead. Fair enough, this was interpreted as saying that "New Delhi is not quite sure what priority this organisation deserves" (Sachdeva, 2023). Accordingly, it is reasonable to suggest that India is attempting to be the leader of South Asia and the Global South yet downplays the significance of Central Asia in its strategic outreach. Despite its claims of interest in Central Asia, it remains focused on its traditional agenda, such as its rivalry with China and Pakistan, enhancing its partnership with the United States and the European Union, strengthening its regional leadership in South Asia, and intensified the rhetoric of Indian leadership among the emerging economies (Peyrouse, 2011).

India's marginal practical engagement with Central Asia is usually explained by the lack of direct connectivity. Geographical obstacles in virtue of disputed borders with China and Pakistan are justified as a reason that challenges India's strategic outreach in Central Asia. India's competition with China both in its internal and external politics impacts India's engagement with Central Asia, where China, in addition to its land borders, is economically and politically among the major partners. Pakistan, due to the disputed Kashmir region that is historically linked to Central Asia, also poses challenges for India. Besides, the Pakistan factor in India's broader foreign policy significantly affects the formulation of India's economic and political engagement in Central Asia.

On the other hand, New Delhi is taking advantage of its close relationship with Russia, a major strategic partner in Central Asia. India, similar to Central Asia, has strong contacts with Russia, which are used, among other things, to expand influence in Central Asia and gain from the situation with sanctioned Russia. The common Soviet military infrastructure, for instance, provides opportunities for India's partnership with Central Asia in the military sphere.

India, meanwhile, promotes itself in Central Asia as a "true friend and partner, which does not have any political or territorial ambitions" (Warikoo, 2019). Traditionally, India relies on its past experience of regular interactions with Central Asia dating back from antiquity all the way through the Soviet era. New Delhi sees the "civilizational" proximity of India, Afghanistan, and the post-Soviet states of Central Asia as a counter to Pakistan's geographic advantages and China's economic gains in Central Asia. Accordingly, India's involvement with Central Asia is determined by whether it will rely on its image based on its historical and cultural links or establish proactive diplomatic measures consistent with its global ambitions (Kavalski, 2019).

Institutionally, India's approach in the region was framed by its "Look North Policy" (1995) and "Connect Central Asia" (2012) programmes, yet the active "Connect Central Asia" policy due to "bureaucratic technicalities and policy inaction" is viewed as sluggish rather than an effective strategy (Stobdan, 2020). Bilaterally, India had concluded strategic partnership agreements with Kazakhstan in 2009, Uzbekistan in 2011, Tajikistan in 2012 and Kyrgyzstan in 2019.

At the regional level, the India-Central Asia Dialogue, which has been held since 2019 in a foreign minister's format, has been elevated to the level of heads of state. The first India-Central Asia Summit was held virtually in January 2023, with the plan to conduct it biannually to foster institutional collaboration.

India – Kazakhstan Relations

Kazakhstan is the largest trade and investment partner of India in Central Asia. Building on the 2009 Declaration of Strategic Partnership, Kazakhstan and India have been working on a thorough dialogue in political, economic, security, and cultural spheres.

Despite India's being among the first to establish diplomatic relations with Kazakhstan, its bilateral engagement with Kazakhstan was low in India's foreign policy in the 1990s. By the early 2000s, New Delhi had reevaluated its approach to the region and to Kazakhstan, and as a result, Kazakhstan in 2009 had concluded strategic partnership with India. A political dialogue between the two countries has intensified during the last decade, especially at the highest level, as seen in frequent meetings of the heads of governments and ministers during mutual visits and on international platforms. India support Kazakhstan's efforts for promoting peace, security and stability in Asia within the Conference on

Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA). Both are involved in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, where in addition to political and economic collaboration, parties are involved in maintaining security in the region and cooperate within the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure.

Institutionally, parties cooperate through the India-Kazakhstan Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC), which is coordinated by the Ministry of Trade and Integration from the Kazakhstan side and the Ministry of Oil and Natural Gas from the Indian side. In addition, seven Joint Working Groups operate on various aspects of cooperation, such as trade and economic cooperation; information technology; military-technical cooperation; textile industry development; the “tea debt”; transport and logistics; and cooperation in space (MEA, 2023).

In terms of economic cooperation, Kazakhstan, with its significant deposits of natural gas and oil, offers India a viable substitute for its energy sources. India imports from Kazakhstan a sizable quantity of raw materials such as oil, metals, and uranium and exports textiles, equipment, and medical supplies to Kazakhstan. The detailed analysis of economic engagement will be discussed in the following section.

Meanwhile, one of the top areas of collaboration between the two nations has been defence, and this has been growing even more since the 2015 Agreement on Defence and Military-Technical collaboration was signed. In particular, the annual military exercise KAZIND, which has been conducted between the armies of Kazakhstan and India since 2016, is regarded as an important mechanism for sharing military expertise and expand military cooperation between the two nations. Within KAZIND, armies conduct joint military training and tactical exercises to counter insurgency and counterterrorism operations in both jungle and mountainous terrains. Indian army also facilitates Kazakhstan’s UN peacekeeping mission (Chaudhury, 2023). Aside from that, Kazakhstan military students have an opportunity to pursue an education as exchange students through intergovernmental agreements or earn a degree in Indian military colleges.

Cooperation in education is presumed among the important areas of cooperation. Specifically, the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme, which is funded by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, is regarded as one of the most well-liked programmes that offers professionals and early career specialists short-

term capacity building courses in India. Through this programme, over 1400 professionals from Kazakhstan were introduced to Indian education and opportunities (Embassy of India). In addition, the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) and the Indian Council of Social Science Research provide scholarships from Kazakhstan to obtain a degree or conduct research in India. For Indian students, the most popular medical program in India – MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery) provided by Kazakhstan universities is a good alternative to obtain a medical degree that has been used by Indian students widely. While the programme was popular among the Indian students, with the war in Ukraine and Russia’s sanctions, the popularity of Kazakhstan universities for Indian students had grown exponentially with over 5,000 students studying at Kazakhstan universities (Kazinform, 2022).

Conventionally, India’s engagement with Kazakhstan is bonded on strong cultural connections. Cultural ties between India and Kazakhstan have been recognised by centuries-long interactions. This shared cultural heritage can act as a springboard for developing closer relations and understanding. The contemporary generation, thanks to Bollywood films, and Indian music and dances, is also familiar with Indian culture. In this regard, the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC), originally the Indian Cultural Centre, was established in 1994 with the goal of fostering Indian customs and culture in Astana.

Hence, the bilateral contacts between India and Kazakhstan have significantly intensified. However, as PM Modi acknowledged during his 2015 trip, the potential of cooperation with the region “remains untapped” (Kavalski, 2019). India’s renewed interest in strengthening its strategic position in Central Asia and Kazakhstan, despite its progress, has not yet taken advantage of its potential.

Bilateral Trade and Investment Cooperation between Kazakhstan and India

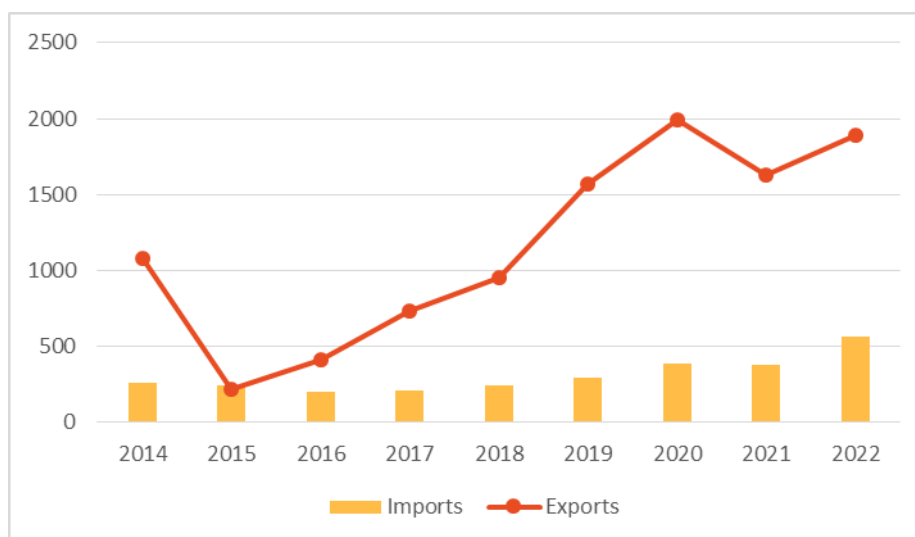
In terms of economic cooperation, India and Kazakhstan declare their goals to increase mutual trade. In order to understand the profile of bilateral trade, further the economic indicators are analysed.

Total trade between the two countries increased from 1343 million USD in 2014 to 2453 million USD in 2022 (Figure 1). Despite this growth, the shares of both countries in their total trade remain insignificant. Kazakhstan’s exports experienced substantial growth, increasing from 220 million

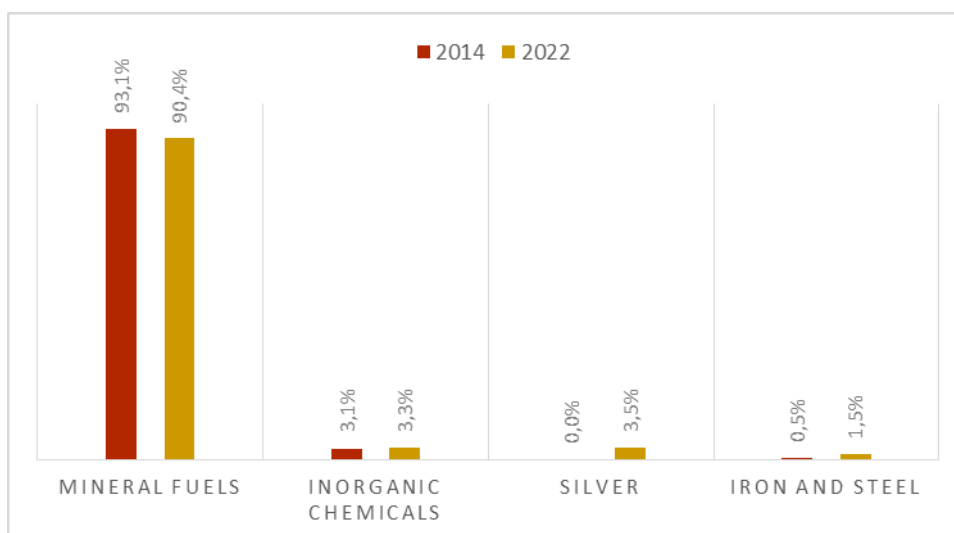
USD in 2015 to 1890 million USD in 2022. In the same period, India's supplies to Kazakhstan changed from 242 to 563 million USD (ITC, 2023).

However, product-based analysis shows that Kazakhstan's exports mainly consist of raw

materials. In particular, the share of mineral fuels in Kazakhstan's total exports to India in 2014 amounted to 93.1%, while in 2022 this indicator was equal to 90.4%. The remaining exports include inorganic chemicals and metals (Figure 2).



Source: the authors' compilation based on ITC (2023) data
Figure 1 – Kazakhstan's trade with India, million USD



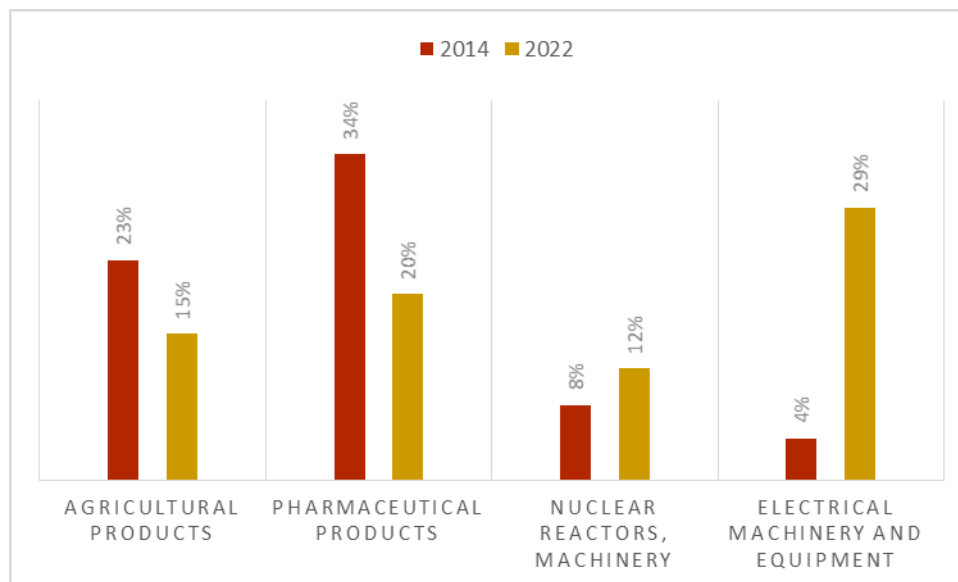
Source: the authors' calculations based on ITC (2023) data
Figure 2 – Kazakhstan's exports to India, by products, share of total exports

In turn, India's exports to Kazakhstan remain diversified (Figure 3). Despite the share of agricultural products in total exports to Kazakhstan showing a decline, the value of exports increased from 60.3 million USD in 2014 to almost 87

million USD in 2022. During the same period, exports of pharmaceutical products grew from 89 to 110 million USD, while the share decreased from 34% to 20%. Kazakhstan's imports of machinery increased substantially. Imports of

nuclear reactors and machinery grew from 20 to 66 million USD, and imports of electrical machinery surged from 11 to almost 162 million

USD. The share of electrical machinery in India's total exports to Kazakhstan jumped from a low 4% to 29% (ITC, 2023).



Source: the authors' calculations based on the ITC (2023) data

Figure 3 – India's exports to Kazakhstan, by products, share of total exports

Thus, India's exports to Kazakhstan remain diversified, while Kazakhstan continues to supply a limited number of products. Despite diversification and increasing figures of bilateral trade, there are important factors restricting mutual trade flows.

First of all, the slow industrialization of Kazakhstan and its limited capacity constrain the supply of agricultural and manufacturing products to India's growing market.

Second, geographical remoteness doesn't allow both Kazakhstan and India to penetrate each other's markets. Trade and transport costs make products less competitive. To overcome this obstacle, it is important to develop transport and port infrastructure, which will require international cooperation with the inclusion of other Central Asian countries. Iran and other parties interested in investing in these infrastructural projects might find connecting South Asia with Central Asia a good option.

Third, there are no trade agreements between India and the Eurasian Economic Union, which can intensify bilateral trade.

Finally, despite presenting itself as a new global economic power, India has low interest in investing in Kazakhstan and implementing joint projects aimed at industrialization and diversification. For

instance, according to data from the National Bank of Kazakhstan (2023), India's foreign direct investments in Kazakhstan increased from low 6 million USD in 2014 to 26 million USD in 2022. As a result, India's share in Kazakhstan's total FDI changed from 0.03% to 0.09%, which is still too moderate to signify improvements.

All these factors lead to low economic engagement between India and Kazakhstan. Some suggest that India's trade policy with Kazakhstan demonstrates one more case when India failed to become engaging, result-oriented, and economically meaningful, which is counterproductive to India's aspirations and restricts its ambition of playing a prominent role in regional and global affairs (Palit, 2021). India's dissociation and disengagement from free trade agreements also caused significant disappointments among its partners over its willingness to work closely on trade.

However, there are significant areas where Kazakhstan and India may expand their cooperation. The service sector is the fastest growing sector in India with the highest labour productivity (Mukherjee, 2013). India's GDP share of value-added services reached 48.6% in 2022 (World Bank, 2023). In 2022, IT sector exports from India amounted to 178

billion USD, while IT services dominated the export with 104 billion USD (Statista, 2023). Human capital, R&D expenditure, physical infrastructure stock and financial sector development are determined as elements that aggregate India's services exports (Sahoo & Dash, 2017). Furthermore, global demand, real exchange rate and manufacturing exports also contributed to the growth of services exports.

Thus, India may build its policy for Central Asia on its strengths, where its potential for providing services stands to be very important. To this end, during the Central Asia-India Summit, Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev invited companies from India to Kazakhstan's market. He mentioned that Kazakhstan was interested in India's experience in training of IT specialists. The President proposed to open an engineering office and IT schools for Central Asia on the basis of Astana Hub, together with the Bagmane technology park and other Indian IT giants (Total.kz, 2022). Further, the delegation from India visited Astana Hub. During the meeting, the parties considered the possibility of attracting large international technology companies to Kazakhstan. Companies from India will bring expertise to the IT market and will improve the quality of human capital in Kazakhstan. Importantly, the participants discussed the development of cooperation between Astana Hub and India's largest IT hub T-Hub in the field of human capital development. It should be mentioned that Astana Hub shows promising results in terms of services production and their exports. Hence, it is interested in penetrating new markets, where India can be a reliable partner. Close collaboration in the services sector will bring India a new status in the region as a new important player with substantial contribution to the development of new industries. Kazakhstan, in turn, should accelerate its industrialization, improve competitiveness of its agriculture and manufacturing using digital services and penetrate Indian market. Implementation of joint projects will deepen trade and investment cooperation.

Conclusion

The paper provided an overview of India's engagement with Kazakhstan, focusing on the time frame after Prime Minister Modi took office. It was

observed that while India is attempting to become among the regional powers and has solid aspirations for increasing its voice in global governance, its engagement with Kazakhstan remains on the periphery of India's major geopolitical agenda. This follows from an assessment of India's foreign policy in general, with Kazakhstan and the Central Asian region, along with an assessment of the performance of economic cooperation, which has demonstrated limited current capacity and potential to increase this engagement. The product-based research revealed that there are significant barriers preventing mutual trade flows, even in spite of diversification and rising bilateral trade numbers.

The authors believe that the IT sector could be a prospective sector for expanding bilateral relations. India's digital economy is the second fastest growing in the world, and Kazakhstan is acknowledged among the most advanced digital economies, both in terms of its digital technology and competitiveness, not only in Central Asia but also in the whole CIS region. Both India and Kazakhstan are eager to advance their IT spheres and export their IT services. Hence, new cooperation could emerge if both sides utilise their efforts.

Apart from that, expanding existing ties in education and culture could boost the touristic potential of both countries. Worth mentioning is that intensifying the air connections, along with simplifying visa requirements, has already allowed for increasing tourist flows in both directions. If both countries amplify the advertisement of each other's potential, together with tourism, it might lead to increased interest in the business sector. Simultaneously, it might lead to increased outcomes in terms of attracting investments.

In general, relations between India and Kazakhstan have grown within the frameworks of their respective governments' multi-alignment and multi-vector strategies, which aim to balance their interactions with one another in light of the geopolitical and economic dynamics that shape the region. Despite the limited economic capacity of cooperation, India and Kazakhstan could unite their efforts to open new prospects for cooperation. In addition to cooperation at the bilateral level, both parties could enhance their partnership on global forums, where both aim to amplify their voices as emerging states.

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