
Editorial: navigating global shifts and opportunities – insights from the *IJDIFE*'s second issue

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1 Introduction

As we embark on 2025, the international landscape is characterised by unprecedented geopolitical, economic, and technological shifts, influencing both the global order and the specific sectors that drive national economies. The second issue of the *International Journal of Diplomacy and Economic Development (IJDIFE)* brings into sharp focus these global transformations, while offering insightful analyses on key issues across a range of disciplines.

The papers in this issue, hailing from India, China, Slovenia, and Bangladesh, provide a comprehensive view of how diplomacy, economic stress, sports, science, and intellectual capital interact within the broader context of contemporary global affairs. These papers reflect the ongoing complexities of international relations and economic integration, while also shedding light on regional developments and their wider global implications.

2 Geostrategic and geoeconomic developments in 2024 and 2025

The years 2024 and 2025 are poised to be pivotal in shaping the future trajectory of global geopolitics and economics (Justinek, 2024; Justinek, 2023; Justinek, 2021; Justinek, 2021a; Justinek, 2022). The growing rivalry between the USA, China, and Russia has become the defining feature of the current geopolitical landscape. Tensions have escalated due to Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine, and China's increasing assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific region. This has led to a recalibration of global alliances and security strategies. In particular, the Indo-Pacific has emerged as a focal point of great power competition, with strategic concerns over the region's vital trade routes and its role in global supply chains.

Simultaneously, the rise of emerging economies continues to challenge the post-World War II international order. India, a key player in the South Asian region, has gained increased geopolitical importance, particularly as it navigates complex relationships with both the West and its eastern neighbours. India's growing influence in global trade, regional security, and non-proliferation efforts is highlighted in several of the papers included in this issue. As a rising power, India faces the challenge of balancing its economic ambitions with the need to maintain regional stability, particularly in relation to China's expanding footprint in the region.

The global economy in 2024 is also under significant strain, with high inflation, supply chain disruptions, and a slow recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. These challenges, combined with increasing geopolitical tensions, have created a volatile environment for international business and trade. A new wave of economic diplomacy, coupled with strategic investments in technology and infrastructure, has become vital for nations seeking to maintain economic growth and stability. This dynamic is well-represented in the articles of this issue, where the relationship between economic factors, diplomacy, and business performance is thoroughly explored.

3 Insights from the current issue of *IJDIFE*

The first paper examines the relationship between stock returns and company-specific factors. Specifically, the study investigates the effect of Growth, Earnings, Dividends, Financial Ratios, Risk, and Volatility on the stock returns of companies listed on the Indian Stock Exchange. The study used an ex post facto research design. The population comprised all Companies listed on NIFTY 50, National Stock Exchange, India. Multiple regression analysis is used to analyse the data and test the hypothesis that financial indicators significantly impact stock returns. Findings reveal that several independent variables, such as Earnings per Share, Dividend Payout Ratio, and Price-to-Book Ratio had a statistically significant relationship with stock returns. This study provides valuable insights for investors and analysts regarding the stock selection process. The findings suggest that combining company-specific factors can help predict stock returns. Few studies have addressed the interplay of company-specific factors and stock returns. This paper provides unique insights into this relationship in a developing economy using comprehensive financial metrics and advanced statistical techniques.

The second paper delves into the role of sports diplomacy, examining its historical and contemporary significance in international relations. The study focuses on the potential for sports to bridge political divides, using the example of 'ping-pong diplomacy' between the USA and China in the 1970s. As US-China relations face renewed strain in the wake of trade wars and strategic rivalries, the paper posits that sports diplomacy could once again serve as a tool for re-establishing dialogue. This concept gains relevance as global tensions rise, and traditional diplomatic channels become increasingly strained. The role of sports in fostering mutual understanding in an era of intensifying competition underscores the broader importance of soft power in international relations.

The third paper provides a fascinating look at science diplomacy, a concept that is becoming increasingly pertinent in addressing the global challenges of climate change, public health, and technological innovation. The paper argues that science diplomacy is essential for small and large nations alike, as it enables collaboration across borders to tackle issues that transcend national capabilities. In an age where scientific innovation is directly linked to economic growth and global competitiveness, integrating science diplomacy with commercial diplomacy offers nations the opportunity to leverage their technological and scientific strengths for economic development.

The fourth paper addresses the impact of economic stress on workers' health and creativity. Given the economic volatility of recent years, particularly in the wake of the pandemic, this study's findings are crucial for understanding the broader socio-economic impacts of financial crises. As businesses face pressure to adapt to changing global conditions, the study highlights the importance of addressing worker well-being to maintain productivity and creativity. This is especially relevant as nations navigate the economic challenges posed by inflation, supply chain disruptions, and geopolitical tensions.

Lastly, the fifth paper brings attention to the challenges of weapons proliferation in the Indo-Pacific, amidst the ongoing great power rivalry between the USA, China, and Russia. With the proliferation of advanced weapons systems in key strategic regions, this paper argues for a more comprehensive approach to non-proliferation efforts, with a special focus on India's role in mitigating risks. As regional powers navigate complex security dynamics, the importance of multilateral arms control agreements and diplomatic efforts to prevent escalation cannot be overstated.

4 Conclusion: a forward-looking perspective

The papers in this issue reflect the complex interplay between diplomacy, economics, technology, and security in an increasingly interconnected world. As we move into 2025, global leaders must contend with an evolving landscape characterised by great power competition, economic instability, and a growing reliance on knowledge-based economies. The insights provided in this issue of *IJDIPE* offer valuable perspectives on how nations can leverage intellectual capital, engage in effective diplomacy, and address global challenges collaboratively. As the world faces the prospect of continued geopolitical shifts, the role of diplomacy in shaping economic outcomes and maintaining global stability remains paramount. In this context, the findings presented in this issue provide important guidance for policymakers, business leaders, and researchers seeking to understand and navigate the complexities of the 21st century.

References

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