

Embassy of India

Berne

India-Switzerland Bilateral Relations

India and Switzerland have had cordial and friendly relations since India's Independence, based on shared values of democracy and rule of law. India's policy of non-alignment and Switzerland's traditional policy of neutrality led to a close understanding between the two countries.

Diplomatic relations with Switzerland were established with the signing of the Treaty of Friendship at New Delhi on 14 August, 1948; one of the first such treaties to be signed by independent India.

Bilateral ties achieved new heights following the visits to Switzerland of Rashtrapati ji in September 2019, PM Shri Narendra Modi in 2016 & 2018 and that of the Swiss President Mrs. Doris Leuthard to India in 2017. **The Joint Statement issued during the visit of the Swiss President in 2017 described the India-Switzerland ties as 'a long standing dynamic partnership'.**

Apart from its Embassy in New Delhi, Switzerland presently has Consulate Generals in Bengaluru and Mumbai; and Honorary Consuls in Kolkata and Chennai. There is a Swiss Business Hub in Mumbai, and a Swissnex office in Bengaluru. India has an Embassy in Berne and a Consulate General in Geneva.

From 1971 to 1976, during and after Bangladesh's liberation war, Switzerland represented India's interests in Pakistan.

2. VVIP visits

➤ **Swiss Dignitary to India:**

- President Mrs. Doris Leuthard – 30 August-2 September, 2017
- President Mrs. Micheline Calmy Rey – 5-7 November, 2007
- President Mr. Pascal Couchepin – 6-12 November, 2003
- President Mr. Flavio Cotti - 1998 [first ever visit by a Swiss President to India]

➤ **Indian dignitary to Switzerland:**

- President Shri Ram Nath Kovind -11-15 September, 2019
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi - January 2018 (For WEF)
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi - 5-6 June, 2016
- President Mrs. Pratibha Devisingh Patil - 30 September to 4 October 2011
- President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam –May 2005
- Prime Minister H. D. Deve Gowda - January 1997(For WEF)
- President Shri V.V. Giri – 1975

- During the state visit of Rastrapati ji Shri Ram Nath Kovind to Switzerland in September 2019, three important documents were signed; LoI on Science and Innovation Alliance, MoU on Technical Cooperation in the field of Climate Change and Environment, MoU on renewal of ICCR chair of Indian Studies at the University of Lausanne.
- The year 2018 was designated “India’s year” at Davos with PM Shri Narendra Modi delivering a key-note address at the WEF opening session. On bilateral front, PM met Swiss President Mr. Alain Berset and discussed cooperation in the areas, such as India-EFTA TEPA, Tax information, renewable energy, BIT, Ayurveda etc.
- During Swiss President Mrs. Doris Leuthard’s state visit to India in 2017, a comprehensive Joint Statement was issued.
- PM Shri Narendra Modi paid an official visit (stopover visit) to Geneva In 2016. **This was a historic visit; the first bilateral visit by an Indian PM to Switzerland since 1997.** PM’s engagements included meeting with Swiss President Mr. Johann N. Schneider-Ammann; a Business Round Table with Switzerland’s top companies; and a meeting with Indian research scholars based at CERN.
- PM Shri Narendra Modi held a bilateral meeting with Swiss President Mr. Alain Berset on 1 December 2023, on the sidelines of COP-28 in Dubai. The two leaders discussed ways to further deepen their partnership, including cooperation in trade and investment, technology, health, education, IT, tourism and people to people ties.

Other recent visits

Incoming:

- Visit of Foreign Minister Dr. Ignazio Cassis [5 February 2024];
- First official visit by a five-member Foreign Affairs Committee delegation from Swiss Council of States to Mumbai and New Delhi from 27 November-1 December 2023.
- Federal Councillor for Economic Affairs, Education and Research, Mr. Guy Parmelin [03-04 October 2022] and [19-20 January 2024 for TEPA FTA negotiations]
- Federal Councillor for Finance Mr. Ueli Maurer [10 August 2022]
- Swiss Vice President and Federal Councillor for Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications Ms. Simonetta Sommaruga paid a working visit to India from 18-21 October, 2019 and held meetings with MOS (IC) for Power, New and Renewable Energy; Minister for Railways and, for Commerce and Industry; and Minister for Housing & Urban Affairs (I/C), Civil Aviation (I/C).

- Federal Councillor Mrs. Simonetta Sommaruga, [18-21 October, 2019];
- Mr. Nik Gugger, MP [7-15 November 2018];
- Foreign Minister Dr. Ignazio Cassis [10 August 2018];
- MP Mr. Nik Gugger and Mayor Jean-Philippe Pinto [1st PIO Parliamentarian Conference [9 January 2018 in New Delhi];
- Federal Councillor Mrs. Simonetta Sommaruga, [5-7 October, 2016];
- Federal Councillor for Economic Affairs, Education and Research Mr. Johann N. Schneider-Ammann, [15-17 May, 2015];
- Foreign Minister Mr. Didier Burkhalter [11-12 November 2013];
- Federal Councillor for Environment, Transport, Energy & Communications Mrs. Doris Leuthard, [18-20 October 2012];
- Federal Councillor for Home Mr. Alain Berset [1-3 October 2012];
- Foreign Minister Ms. Micheline Anne-Marie Calmy-Rey [August 2010];
- Four-member Swiss Parliamentary delegation [12 February 2016].

Outgoing:

- Indian delegation in World Economic Forum (WEF) meeting in Davos from 15-19 January, 2024 included Union cabinet ministers, Ms. Smrit Zubin Irani (Minister of Women & Child Development, and Minority Affairs), Shri Hardeep Singh Puri (Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas) and Mr. Ashwini Vaishnaw (Minister of Railways, Communications, and Electronics & Information Technology); In addition Chief Ministers from Telangana and Maharashtra also participated. RBI Governor, Secretary General of NHRC and Chairman of Finance Commission along with the captains of Indian industry attended various WEF meetings.
- Indian participation in World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos from 16-20 January, 2023 included Union cabinet ministers, Mr. Raj Kumar Singh (Minister of Power and New & Renewable Energy), Ms. Smrit Zubin Irani (Minister of Women & Child Development, and Minority Affairs), Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya (Minister of Health and Family Welfare, and Chemicals and Fertilizers), Mr. Ashwini Vaishnaw (Minister of Railways, Communications, and Electronics & Information Technology);
- Indian delegation in WEF 2022 in Davos from 22-26 May, 2022, included CIM Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Shri Hardeep Singh Puri and Minister of Health and Family Welfare Shri Mansukh Mandaviya;

- MoS for External Affairs and Culture Smt. Meenakashi Lekhi [28-30 September 2021];
 - For WEF 2020, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Railways Shri Piyush Goyal; Minister of State for Shipping and Chemicals & Fertilizers Shri Mansukh L. Mandaviya PM's Sherpa for G20 Shri Suresh Prabhu, Chief Minister, Madhya Pradesh Shri Kamal Nath]; Chief Minister, Karnataka Shri B.S. Yedurappa; Minister of Finance and Planning, Punjab Shri Manpreet Singh Badal; Minister of IT, Telangana Shri K.T. Rama Rao;
 - Minister for Health and Social Justice, Government of Kerala Mrs. K.K. Shailaja Teacher [26 November 2019; Berne];
 - Chief Minister of Kerala Shri Pinarayi Vijayan (12-15 May 2019);
 - MoS for External Affairs General (Dr.) V.K. Singh (Retd.) [26 November 2018; Berne];
 - Minister of Health and Family Welfare Shri J.P. Nadda [19 May 2018];
 - Parliamentary Delegation from Maharashtra [separate visits in February and April 2018];
 - Minister of State (I/C) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy [June 2016];
 - EAM Shri Salman Khurshid [22 January 2014];
 - Minister of State (IC) for Sports & Youth Affairs Shri Jitender Singh [14-15 May 2013];
 - CIM Shri Anand Sharma [8 April 2013];
 - Lok Sabha Speaker Smt. Meira Kumar [16-19 October, 2011; 16-17 July 2010];
 - an 18-member Indian Parliamentary Goodwill delegation led by Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Water Resources Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal [1-4 April 2010];
 - Minister of Textiles Shri Dayanidhi Maran [25-28 October 2009];
 - Minister for Road Transport & Highways Shri Kamal Nath [11-12 August, 2009].
- Virtual Meetings:**
- CIM Shri Piyush Goyal and Swiss Vice-President Mr. Guy Parmelin [8 December 2020]

- EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar and Swiss Federal Councillor for Foreign Affairs Dr. Ignazio Cassis [9 June, 2021]

3. Bilateral Institutional Mechanism

- **Foreign Office Consultations (FOC):** Secretary-level FOC dialogue was established in 1996 with its first round taking place in 2000. The 11th round of FOC was held in New Delhi in August 2022. **The latest round co-chaired by Sh. Sanjay Verma, Secretary (West), MEA and Swiss State Secretary for Foreign Affairs was held on 8 December 2023 in Berne.**
- **Joint Economic Commission:** Set up in 1959 to strengthen economic and commercial TIES, its 18th session was held virtually on 9 September 2021 co-chaired by Joint Secretary (Europe), Department of Commerce, India and Head of Bilateral Economic Relations, State Secretariat of Economic Affairs from the Swiss side. **The latest round was held in Geneva on 24 November 2023 with Additional Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry leading the Indian side.**
- **Joint Committee on Science & Technology:** First meeting of the Joint Committee on S&T was held in 2011 in Berne. The latest [6th] Meeting was held in October 2022 in New Delhi. Secretary, Department of Science and Technology (DST) from India, and Mr. Guy Parmelin, Federal Councillor, Department of EAER, jointly inaugurated the meeting.
- **Consular Dialogue:** First round of the composite dialogue on Consular and Legal matters was held in New Delhi in 2012. Sixth round was held in New Delhi in February 2023. **The last round took place in Berne in September 2023** co-chaired by Additional Secretary (OIA-I), MEA and Director International Affairs, State Secretariat for Migration(SEM), Federal Department of Justice & Police(FDJP).
- **Financial Dialogue:** First round was held in Berne on 6 July 2012. The 4th round was held in 2021 in India co-chaired by Secretary, DEA and Swiss State Secretary for International Finance. The next round is expected to take place through virtual Conference on 20 March 2024 led by Secretary, DEA from our side.
- **Defence Dialogue:** First Defence dialogue was held on 18 November 2016 in New Delhi.
- **Joint Working Group on Rail Corporation:** First JWG Meeting under the MoU was held in 2019 at New Delhi. Second meeting was held in Berne in August 2022. The two sides have finalised a new framework MOU (last one expired in 2023) which is ready for signature.
- **Joint Working Group on Climate Change and Environment:** First meeting was held through video conferencing in September 2021.

4. Bilateral MoUs/Agreements

Year of Signing	Description of MoU/Agreement
1948	Treaty of Friendship signed at New Delhi on 14 Aug 1948 [came into force w.e.f. 05 May 1949]
1949	Interim Agreement on airlines between Switzerland and India (final Agreement in 2001)
1960	Agreement concerning the opening of transfer credits (with Implementing Protocol and Exchange of Letters)
1966	Agreement for the duty-free entry of relief supplies and packages Agreement on Technical and Scientific Co-operation
1989	Exchange of letters on mutual assistance in criminal matters
1991	Agreement on the granting of a Mixed Financing
1994	Agreement for the avoidance of double taxation w.r.t. taxes on income, signed in 1994, and amended by the supplementary protocols signed in 2000 and 2010.
1997	Agreement for the Promotion and Protection of Investment
1999	Agreement on Collaboration in Biotechnology
2002	Letter of Agreement between the SECO and UNIDO concerning the project - Cleaner Technology Promotion in India
2003	Agreement on cooperation in the field of Science and Technology Agreement on Cooperation in the event of Disasters
2005	Grant Agreement between the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs and the International Competence Center for Organic Agriculture in India (ICCOA) on the Project "Indian Organic Market Development Project"
2007	MoU on intellectual property
2009	Agreement on Social Security
2011	MoU on Mutual Cooperation in Local Governance MoU for cooperation in Energy Efficiency MoU on Financial Dialogue MOU establishing the 'Rabindranath Tagore Chair in Indian Studies'. Swiss side had terminated the agreement in April 2023.
2012	MoU signed between the Indian Council of Social Science Research and the University of Lausanne for institutional cooperation and social sciences and humanities projects under the ISJRP
2016	MOU on Cooperation in the fields of Skill Development as well as Vocational and Professional Education and Training (lapsed) Arrangement on Authorization for Dependent Person of Diplomatic, Consular, Technical and Administrative Staff of Diplomatic and Consular

	Mission to perform gainful employment
	Technical arrangement on the Identification and Return of Swiss and Indian Nationals [renewed in 2022]
	Agreement on Mutual Visa Exemption for Holders of Diplomatic Passport
	Joint Declaration on the introduction of the Automatic Exchange of Information on Tax matters
2017	MOU signed between Konkan Railways Corporation Ltd., India and Versuchs Stollen Hagerback AG
	MoU between Konkan Railway Cooperation Ltd. (KRCL) and Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH Zurich) in the field of tunneling and underground structures
	MoU on Technical Cooperation in Railway Safety & Technology
	Agreement pursuant to Article 28 paragraph 6 of the Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters
2019	MoU on Technical Cooperation in the field of Climate Change and Environment
	Letter of Intent for further strengthening the India-Switzerland relations for the future in the form of an India-Switzerland Science and Innovation Alliance
2020	Protocol amending the Agreement relating to Air Services

5. Economic & Commercial Relations

- Commercial contacts between India and Switzerland date back to the early 19th century when in 1851 the Volkart Trading Co. established its offices in Basel and Mumbai. During the First World war, Switzerland set up its consulates in key locations around the world, including in Mumbai, to secure food and economic prospects.
- The Integral Coach Factory (ICF) in Chennai set up, based on 1949 agreement signed between the GoI and the Swiss Cars and Elevators Manufacturing Ltd. Zurich, expanded its India network, diversifying its activities, and soon becoming the backbone of Switzerland’s economic presence in India.
- The Indo-Swiss Treaty of Friendship signed in 1948 laid the foundation for a strong economic content to the bilateral relationship. Article 3 to 6 of this Treaty secured the “most favoured foreign nation treatment” to Switzerland. As provided by the Treaty itself, it has set the pace for further treaties like Double Taxation Treaty in November, 1994, followed by Amendment protocol in 2010, Promotion and Protection of Investment Treaty in July 1997. The first major investment by Swiss companies in India came in the mid-50s.

Bilateral trade

- Switzerland has remained an important trading partner for us, though trade balance has been in its favour. It was our 20th largest trading partner in 2022-23. During 2023-24, it is our 15th largest trading partner. While our export figures have remained consistent in the past five years, our imports have moved up and

down as a substantial part of it is in gold bullion. Switzerland is amongst world's major gold refining centres.

Bilateral trade figures (Billion USD)

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 (Jan-Sept 2023)
India's Exports	1.034	0.987	1.235	1.276	1.268	1.287	1.340	0.737
India's Imports	14.973	20.525	18.025	17.785	11.342	29.512	16.291	10.041
Total Trade	16.007	21.512	19.260	19.061	12.610	30.799	17.631	10.778

[Source: DoC, Ministry of Commerce & Industry]

➤ Presently, major items of Indian exports to Switzerland include organic chemicals, pearls, precious stones and jewellery, textiles and garments, dyestuffs, electrical machinery and parts, leather products, shoes and shoe uppers, cotton, plastics, coffee, etc.

➤ Besides bullion, other major items of Swiss exports to India consist of chemicals & pharmaceuticals, machinery, transport equipment's, precision engineering products and watches, etc.

6. Swiss investments in India

➤ FDIs from Switzerland to India from April 2000-March 2023 were **USD 9.77 billion** placing it at 12th position globally. Swiss FDI in India increased by 53% during 2015-2022 (recorded at an average annual growth rate of 9%).

➤ 323 Swiss companies are present in India with a subsidiary, joint venture or liaison or representation office, out of which 287 entered Indian market post liberalization of Indian economy in 1991. These companies have created over 1,35,370 jobs in India. 108 companies have their manufacturing facility in Switzerland. 74 out of 108 use India as export hub for other markets. 30 Swiss companies operate their R&D centre in India.

➤ Banking and Financial Services, Insurance, Machine, Electrical Engineering and Metals (MEM) & Precision, Construction, Information & Communications, Technology and Software and Services are the leading sectors.

➤ The five states of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Haryana, Delhi and Tamil Nadu account for approx 90% of Swiss investments in India. Mumbai-Pune corridor (45%) and Delhi-NCR (23%) together account for over 2/3rd of Swiss companies in India.

➤ Top 10 Swiss employers in India include Credit Suisse (Now merged with UBS), ABB, Nestle India, TE Connectivity, Rieter India, UBS Business Solutions, Schindler India, Adecco India, Temenos India and STM Microelectronics.

➤ MMTC-PAMP, a joint venture between the Government of India undertaking MMTC and Swiss group PAMP, is the first domestic innovator to develop gold bars

and colorization of gold coins.

Different sectors in which Swiss companies are operating in India include:

➤ **Pharmaceuticals:**

- Roche Diagnostics invested CHF 20 million in its India R&D center to develop novel technologies for labs and new solutions for communicable diseases.
- Novartis' development teams in India focus on developing/ designing clinical trials for new novel drugs and global health diseases impacting the country and the world.
- Lonza India has a small-scale multi-purpose manufacturing plant for biopharmaceuticals, biotherapeutic media manufacturing plant, lab for biologics and bioinformatics. The project has generated 55 jobs.

➤ **Construction:**

- Flughafen Zurich Ag has invested CHF 650 million in India to develop Noida International Airport which is being developed as a Greenfield airport.
- Geobrugg India is the pioneer in the supply and installation of the very first ETA (European Technical Approval) sanctioned rockfall barrier in India. The company has installed rockfall and slope protection systems at 15 locations on the trek to Vaishno Devi and is currently involved in constructing India's first green tunnel.
- Fässler Engineering is responsible for the construction of Chenab bridge, a railway steel arch bridge between Bakkal and Kauri in the Reasi district of J&K. The bridge, once constructed, will be the world's highest rail bridge at a height of 359 mt. above the Chenab river.

➤ **Railways**

- The Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) is the biggest in mountain railways construction project since Indian independence. Amberg India has been involved in the detailed designing for the construction of 345 km of new rail line, construction supervision and 3D monitoring of the tunnels.
- Geobrugg India, another Swiss company well known for its tunneling technology, has supervised the development of the construction of the Chenani-Nashri tunnel in J&K.
- Lombardi Engineering is responsible for executive design and work supervision of a 16 km long section of the Rishikesh - Karanprayag railway in Uttarakhand.

➤ **Skill Development**

- Schindler India's 4 training centres compliment the Schindler University in India instituted in 2017.
- Geberit established a plumbing lab at the Pune University and working with the Indian Plumbing Association to create learning programs. The Geberit technical faculty trains around 5,000 plumbers at its lab annually.
- 40 graduates have been trained under the Swiss VET program offered to Bühler employees and customers.

- The Multi-Skilled Production Technician (MSTP) program by Rieter, trains staff on work processes and organizational culture to maintain consistent quality.
- MoU between HTMi Switzerland and NSDC to impart skills to the selected institutes.

MISSP: Market outreach initiative of the Indian Mission in Berne

- The Swiss SMEs are well integrated in the European Assembly Line and makes up around 99% of the Swiss companies. Therefore, in order to introduce Swiss SMEs to explore, enter, and expand their presence in the Indian market, the Indian Embassy in Berne, launched the 'Momentum in India: Swiss SMEs Programme' (MISSP). As of date, the MISSP programme has onboard 151 Swiss companies which represent various sectors ranging from Defence, Pharma, Food & beverages, Machine Tools, Railways, Chemicals, to AI, Spece Tech and others.
- The MISSP focusses on providing integrated, facilitative platform for connecting the Swiss SMEs sector for India market entry services. It is a one-stop source for companies requiring support services for their Indian access strategy with the benefits of special workshops and webinars, networking events, information exchange, etc.
- The program is implemented with the support of Central and State Governments in India and other key Indian and Swiss industry partners, which assist the Swiss SMEs in various aspects of doing business in India.
- Since the inception of the MISSP Program, the Mission organized various sectoral focused events / workshops and webinars in close collaborations with Swiss Associations, Indian EPCs and Invest India, etc.

Some recent investments by Swiss Companies in India in 2023

- Zurich entered Indian general insurance market with Kotak Mahindra Bank through the proposed acquisition of a 51% stake in Kotak Mahindra General Insurance Company Limited ("Kotak General Insurance") for USD 488 million. This is the largest FDI in non-life insurer in India by any foreign company.
- Geobrugg expanded with new production facility in India to provide top-notch solutions for the mitigation of natural hazards, including landslides and rockfalls.
- Stäubli, a leading global industrial and mechatronic solution provider, opened a USD 15 million facility in Bengaluru.
- Akkodis, a global digital engineering company and tech business of the Adecco Group, announced the expansion of its operations in India with the opening of a new office in Chennai.
- Amcor, a global leader in developing and producing responsible packaging solutions, entered into an agreement to acquire Phoenix Flexibles. .

7. Indian investments in Switzerland

- Overseas Direct Investment from India to Switzerland for April 2020 – November 2022 was **USD 7.2 billion** placing it at 10th position. Recent Indian investments have gone into sectors such as ICT, life sciences, engineering and chemicals.
- Major Indian IT companies including TCS, Infosys, HCL, Tech Mahindra, etc. have their offices in Switzerland and provide services to major Swiss pharma companies, banks and insurance firms. Indian companies in pharma and life sciences sectors in Switzerland include Dr. Reddy, Wockhardt and Glenmark. Tata and Birla also have their representative offices.
- 140 Indian companies have invested in 179 entities in Switzerland and have created about 5,000 jobs in Switzerland. Technology, Life Sciences and Advanced Manufacturing are top 3 sectors with 58, 39 and 25 companies respectively. In Technology, IT and Computer Software comprise of 86% of investments. In Life Sciences, Pharmaceuticals and Medical devices comprise of 95% and in Advanced Manufacturing, construction and automotive comprise of 48% of investments.
- Dishman Pharmaceuticals and Chemicals is a leading outsourcing partner for pharmaceutical companies. In 2006, the company made a major acquisition of the pharmaceutical business of Solutia Europe for CHF 73 million, forming Carbogen Amcis. In 2017, the combined company became Dishman Carbogen Amcis.
- TCS formed its Swiss subsidiary in 2006 after acquiring a majority stake in its Swiss partner TKS-Teknosoft. In 2021-2022, TCS generated CHF 454 million in revenue in Switzerland.
- Glenmark, an Indian bio-pharma company has established its base in Switzerland for its biologics segment through its US-based subsidiary Ichnos Sciences. Company entered Switzerland in 2006 through the biologics research center in Neuchâtel. In 2014, it opened a manufacturing facility in Neuchâtel to produce Monoclonal Antibodies (MABs).
- TVS motor company entered Swiss market by acquiring 75% stake in Switzerland's largest e-bike player, the Swiss E-Mobility Group (SEMG).

8. India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement [TEPA]

- Negotiations on bilateral free trade agreement started in October 2008. It contains 14 tracks viz. Trade in Goods [TiG], Trade in Services [TiS], Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary [SPS] measures, Technical Barriers to Trade [TBT], Customs and Tariff Facilitation [TF], Intellectual Property Rights [IPRs], Legal and Horizontal Provisions, Investment, Competition, Government Procurement, Dispute Settlement, Trade Remedies, Rules of Origin [RoO] and Sustainable Development.

- A total of 13 Rounds were held till November 2013 when both sides came to an impasse over IPR and Data Security issues. The negotiations, however, resumed in 2016, and 4 more rounds were held until 2017.
- The 18th round of negotiations was held at New Delhi in July 2023. The discussions were primarily centered around trade in goods, trade in services, rules of origin, intellectual property rights (IPR), and trade and sustainable development.
- The two sides have intensified negotiation process through regular meetings in 2023. The latest (21st) round of negotiations is being held on 9-13 January 2024 in New Delhi.

9. Bilateral Investment Treaty

- India and Switzerland signed a Bilateral Investment Treaty in 1997, which came into force in 2000 with an initial duration of ten years. Later, Pursuant to the Cabinet approval on the Model Indian BIT in 2015, it was decided to terminate the existing BITs with countries whose initial duration period is over and re-negotiate based on the revised Model BIT.
- Subsequently, the Swiss side sent their draft text proposal and preliminary comments on the Indian Model BIT. The two sides held preliminary discussions through a video-conference in 2016. In follow up meetings, Switzerland acknowledged termination of existing Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement with India with effect from 6 April, 2017.
- So far, five rounds of negotiations have been held. In the last round held in May 2023, discussions focused on BITs with other states, new trends across globe in Dispute Settlement Mechanism, definition of investor, scope, investment protection standards, right to regulate and exception clauses.

10. Science & Technology Cooperation

- The Inter-governmental agreement for S&T cooperation was signed in 2003 during the state visit of Swiss President to India. Within the framework of this agreement, the Indo-Swiss Joint Research Program (ISJRP) was initiated with Swiss Government in 2005 in-order to further advance the bilateral S&T co-operation.
- The program has supported cutting edge research that brings together faculty and young researchers from Switzerland and India. The ISJRP call for Joint Research Projects (JRPs) is financed by Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) in Switzerland and the Department of Science & Technology and Department of Biotechnology (DBT) in India on the principles of reciprocity, parity and activity matching funding.
- A Joint Committee, co-chaired by Secretaries from both sides has been established as per bilateral agreement. The Joint Committee is responsible for review of all the bilateral activities under the Indo-Swiss S&T Cooperation programme. The last meeting was held in New Delhi in October 2022.

➤ During the State visit of President Shri Ram Nath Kovind to Switzerland in 2019, a Letter of Intent for further strengthening S&T cooperation under India-Switzerland Science and Innovation Alliance was signed. The Mission celebrated 2019 as the India Year of Science and Technology in Switzerland.

- Some Indo-Swiss Joint Projects in the field of S&T include:
- Green Electric Mobility (GEM) in India Project
 - Clean Energy Policy (CEP)
 - Remote sensing-based Information and Insurance for Crops in Emerging economies (RIICE)
 - Indo-Swiss Collaboration in Biotechnology (ISCB)
 - Indo-Swiss Programme on Building Energy Efficiency (BEEP)
 - Construction assistance in India: Improving energy efficiency in building

India-Swiss Innovation Platform

➤ A new collaborative mechanism with Switzerland in the fields of Innovation and R&D- “India-Swiss Innovation Platform” was launched in Bengaluru on 30 October 2023. It is a joint collaborative effort between Swissnex India (as the lead coordinator), Swiss Business Hub India, Indian Mission in Berne and Swiss Embassy in New Delhi. Relevant Indian institutions, including Departments of Science & Technology (DST) and Bio-technology, etc., are envisaged as partners to jointly collaborate on platform’s future activities.

➤ The platform would provide an institutional mechanism for our scientific, business, education and government agencies to exchange ideas to jointly work to find innovative solutions to the challenges faced by humanity. The identified focus areas include health, sustainability and digital transformation spaces. Through regular dialogue in a planner manner, concrete proposals submitted to Indo-Swiss Joint Research Programmes - a bilateral funding instrument - would be implemented under this institutional framework.

➤ The platform launch coincided with the first Indo-Swiss Anti-microbial Resistance (AMR) dialogue, in which about 50 experts from the two countries participated to discuss innovative approaches to address the serious but silent public health threat posed by AMR to the humanity.

11. Cooperation in Railways

➤ An MoU was signed between our Railways Ministry and with its Swiss counterpart for technical cooperation in Rail sector on 31 August 2017 with cooperation in areas including Traction Rolling stock, EMU and Train sets, Traction Propulsion Equipments, Tilting Trains, Railway Electrification Equipment, Train scheduling and operation improvement and Tunneling technology, etc.

➤ In 2017, two more MoUs were signed in the field of Railways; a) MoU between Konkan Railway Cooperation Ltd. (KRCL) and Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH Zurich) in the field of tunneling and underground structures. b) MoU between KRCL and Hagerbach AG.

- The first JWG Meeting under the MoU was held in 2019 at New Delhi. The meeting was launched by Chairman Railway Board from Indian side and Federal Councillor and Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Environment, Transport, Energy & Communications from the Swiss Side. The 2nd meeting of JWG on technical cooperation in rail sector was held at Berne on 30 August 2022.
- In October 2023, the Swiss side has shown keenness in renewing the MOU on Rail sector Cooperation which has expired in 2023. A new MoU has been finalized and is ready for signature.
- Swiss rail companies/entities involved in operations in India are:
 - Stadler Rail Management AG
 - Furrer & Frey
 - Huber+Suhner
 - ABB Ltd
 - SWISSRAIL
 - SWISSMEM

12. Air Connectivity & Tourism

- An Air Services Agreement (ASA) was signed in May 2001. **Swiss Airlines commenced direct flight to Delhi from December 2007.** The Protocol amending India-Switzerland Air Services Agreement was signed in March 2020. Swiss Air operates direct daily flights to Delhi and Mumbai under code sharing arrangement with Air India. The passenger composition on these flights is approximately 60% Indians and 40% Swiss. **There is, however, no Indian carrier operating on this sector.**
- There is need for Indian carriers to operate on India-Switzerland sector, as a significant number of sixth freedom rights passengers from India are using Swiss Airways to fly to destinations in Europe and North America.

Indian Tourists in Switzerland:

- Switzerland is the prime destination for Indian tourists and around 1,50,000 Indians visited Switzerland in the year 2022. As the world is coping up from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of tourists is expected to increase in the coming years. In 2023 so far (till October, 2023), around 1,90,000 Indians have visited Switzerland.

13. Migration Mobility Partnership (MMP)

- A Migration Mobility Partnership (MMP) MoU at our initiative is under active negotiations. Swiss side is agreeable to early finalization. The two sides concluded the last round of "Migration & Consular Dialogue" on 19 September 2023 in Berne. Detailed discussions took place regarding the revised draft MMPA and the revised draft Agreement on the Exchange of Young Professionals, which were developed during the 2nd Round of negotiations, held on 19 May 2023 in New Delhi. Earlier on 24 February 2023, the Swiss side desired to change the nomenclature of the MMPA to an MoU to which the Indian side agreed. Both sides have agreed to take forward

the momentum generated on entering into an MoU on Migration and Mobility Partnership.

14. Education/Skill Development

- In 2016, an MoU was signed between our Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) and the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI), on Cooperation in the fields on Skill Development as well as Vocational and Professional Education and Training. The purpose of the MoU was to support India's massive skill requirements as well as to strengthen Swiss vocational and professional education and training in international context. Under this MoU, the 1st meeting of the Indo-Swiss Joint Working Group on Vocational Education and Training was held in New Delhi in 2017. The MoU expired in 2019.
- A virtual meeting between Ministry of Skill Development (India) and SERI to review the MoU and to discuss modalities for bilateral collaboration in the field of Skill Development was held in 2021. It was decided to collaborate towards specific skilling projects in the areas of interest to each other.

15. Ayurveda & Health Cooperation

- Complementary Medicine is a part of the Swiss Federal Constitution. Ayurveda along with three other traditional systems of medicine i.e. Chinese, European and homeopathy, has been approved for federally recognized national diploma examination in Switzerland.
- Swiss Government regulates the Ayurveda profession. Since 2015, Ayurveda is recognized into two professions for which Federal Diplomas are issued:
 - a) Ayurveda Medicine [4000 learning hours]- The competences of Ayurveda Medicine include Medical diagnosis, Nutritional advices, dietetics, Prescription and preparation of medicines, All medical manual treatment techniques and Invasive treatments (Pancha Karma).
 - b) Ayurveda Therapy [2200 learning hours]- The competences of Ayurveda Therapy include Therapeutic assessment, Nutritional advices, dietetics and Therapeutic massage therapies.
- The Therapist can assist the Naturopath practitioner in manual and invasive treatment techniques under their supervision and associated in the same clinic. For an Indian BAMS degree holder Ayurvedic doctor to prescribe as an Ayurveda practitioner in Switzerland, he must pass a Federal diploma exam of either of the two recognised professions of Ayurveda, as described above.
- The Association of Swiss Ayurveda and Therapeutics was one of the Partner organisations for the 4th edition of the CII Global Ayurveda Summit which took place in 2020.
- During the 8th Geneva Health Forum, a session on 'Indian Traditional Medicine Systems interacting with Modern Medicine System' was held in 2020, in which Ayurveda and Unani streams of medicine were discussed. Keynote speeches

during the inaugural Plenary were made by Minister of Health and Family Welfare and Minister of State for AYUSH.

- A virtual meeting on India-Switzerland Bilateral Health Cooperation took place in 2021 with the participation of Swiss Federal Office of Public Health, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (India) and Ministry of AYUSH (India).
- In 2022, Ministry of AYUSH has shared a draft letter of intent with the Swiss side for cooperation and collaboration in the field of Ayurveda.

16. Climate Change & Environment

- Switzerland has a long history of cooperation with India in the area of urban planning. One of Switzerland's flagship projects in India is the Capacity Building for Low Carbon and Climate Resilient City Development project (also known as CapaCITIES project).
- This project is implemented by the South Pole Carbon Management, E-concept, ICLEI South Asia and the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA). The project CapaCITIES was initiated in 2016 with four cities in two States: Gujarat and Tamil Nadu. Through the project, the four partner cities have prepared Climate Resilient City Action Plans.
- During the State visit of President Shri Ram Nath Kovind to Switzerland in 2019, an MoU on Technical Cooperation in the field of Climate Change and Environment was signed. Under this MoU, the first meeting of India-Switzerland JWG on environment was held through video conferencing in September 2022.

17. Cultural relations & people to people contacts

- Switzerland has always been a meeting point for East and West and the connection between Himalayas and Alps are stronger and deeper. Swami Vivekananda visited Switzerland in 1896. Switzerland also hosted another great sage of India, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, who is the founder of Transcendental Meditation. This land also welcomed Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore in 1926 and Mahatma Gandhi in 1931.
- A 'Festival of India' in 12 cities of Switzerland and Liechtenstein was organized in 2018 under the theme 'Connecting Himalayas with Alps' which was well received. The celebrations of 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi provided great opportunities to promote Gandhian values.
- 'India in the Alps' - an Indian cultural festival showcasing music, dance, exhibition, cuisine, crafts, Bollywood & yoga in Switzerland was organized in 2022 at Berne, Zurich & Geneva as a part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations. The events were well received by diaspora as well as Swiss populace.
- To celebrate the 75th anniversary of India's independence and also of India-Switzerland diplomatic relations, photo exhibitions of great Indian personalities like

Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Swami Vivekananda were organized in various cantons across Switzerland during 2022-2023.

➤ Swiss Games Museum in Montreux has a unique collection of games which originated in India. While the Lugano museum has some of the rare collections of photographs of Mahatma Gandhi, the Swiss National Museum in Prangins has an exhibition of unique collection of cotton fabric from India. The Charlie Chaplin Museum at Vevey also has an India connect.

➤ Museum Rietberg in Zurich has one of the best collections of Indian Miniature paintings. The exhibition, 'Being Jain: Art & Culture of an Indian Religion' at Museum Rietberg in November 2022, showcased Jainism in India and the intrinsic philosophies of non-violence, tolerance, ecology etc. that it propagates. The Exhibition featured 20 objects loaned from various Museums in India as a part of the display.

➤ **ICCR Chair:** A Rabindranath Tagore Chair on Indian Studies (Hindi) was established at University of Lausanne (UNIL) as per MoU signed between ICCR and the University of Lausanne in 2011 where ICCR appointed a Hindi professor every year for the spring semester that run from February to June.

➤ The MoU was further extended in September 2019 and continued till academic year 2021-22. The University serves as a useful and important link for extending our cultural outreach to a large number of students and academicians.

➤ **Courses on Indian Studies at Swiss universities:** The Universities of Lausanne (UNIL) offer courses on Indian Studies which covers language and literature (Hindi & Sanskrit), culture and history.

➤ The University of Zurich (UZH) offer courses on Indian Studies/ Indology. In addition to the introduction to Indology, the course offerings include a diverse range of modules in the core areas of language acquisition (Hindi, Sanskrit & Pali), culture and society.

➤ **Statues/busts of Indian icons:**

- A Mahatma Gandhi Statue was installed at Ariana Park, Geneva in 2007.
- A bust of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore was unveiled at University of Lausanne in October 2011 by President Smt. Pratibha Devi Singh Patil during her visit to Switzerland.
- A bronze bust of Swami Vivekananda was installed at Saas Fee in August 2013 on the occasion of 150th Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. Saas Fee was visited by Swami Vivekananda in August 1896.
- In a major public event, President Shri Ram Nath Kovind unveiled a bronze bust of Mahatma Gandhi in September, 2019 along the banks of Lake Geneva

at a picturesque location in Villeneuve where Mahatma Gandhi visited in 1931 to meet Romain Rolland.

➤ **Yoga:**

- Yoga is very popular in Switzerland. Many private yoga studios/resorts/retreats offer yoga classes/ sessions in almost all cantons of the country. About a quarter of a million Swiss residents are yoga practitioners and women make up the bulk of the yoga-practicing population.
- Embassy of India, Berne was part of “The Guardian Ring” programme envisaged for International Day of Yoga 2022 celebrations.
- In its efforts to further the reach of Yoga in Switzerland, our Mission in Berne has been organizing Yoga sessions at various cities in Switzerland. The main event of 9th International Day celebrations was held on 21 June 2023 at the iconic Bundesplatz in front of the Swiss Parliament.

➤ **Bollywood Connection:** Indian films are regularly shot in Switzerland. The first Indian film to be shot in Switzerland was Sangam in 1964 in the famous alpine region of Grindelwald-Jungfrau. Since then many Indian movies, including Bollywood blockbusters have been shot in the Swiss Alps.

➤ Bollywood filmmaker Yash Chopra who shot many movies in Interlaken region in Switzerland, was honored by the city of Interlaken with a bronze statue in a central location in Interlaken.

18. Indian community

➤ The Indian Diaspora comprises approx. 27,300 Indians, including over 8,750 persons of Indian origin. Most of them are professionals in Engineering, IT, pharmaceuticals, paramedical and nursing fields. Some are deployed in the International Organizations like UN, UPU and other prestigious Swiss institutes, like Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich and EPFL, Lausanne.

➤ Our Diaspora also includes a Member of Federal Parliament, a member of Cantonal Parliament, Mayor, CEOs and senior executives of several companies, senior Government officials, professors, doctors, engineers and students.

➤ The Indian community is concentrated in Zurich, Geneva, Basel, Baden, Berne and Lausanne. About 750 Indian students are studying in Switzerland. A number of Indian associations actively organize cultural activities and celebrate Indian Festivals and national days.

➤ Some prominent members of Indian Diaspora, who received Pravasi Bhartiya Samman Award in Switzerland are:

- **Late Dr. Rajendra Joshi**, Swiss-based NRI scientist was one of the most prominent members of Indian Diaspora who passed in 2019.

- **Dr. Shachi Gurumayum**, an NRI based in Switzerland had been conferred the Award in 2021 for his contribution in the field of Bio-tech Agronomy.
- **Dr. Archana Sharma**, a particle physicist at CERN is among the prominent personalities of diaspora who is conferred the Award 2023 in S&T field.

20 February 2024