



भारत का राजदूतावास, बर्न
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Press Release

Visit of Minister of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland to India (August 08-12, 2018)

Mr Ignazio Cassis, Swiss Foreign Minister (Head of Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of the Swiss Confederation) accompanied by senior officials of his Ministry, is visiting India from 08-12 August 2018. The visit of Minister Cassis is part of the regular exchange between the two countries. During the visit, Minister Cassis had a meeting with External Affairs Minister, Smt Sushma Swaraj, in New Delhi on 10 August.

Minister Cassis and EAM Swaraj held cordial discussions on various aspects of bilateral ties as well as important regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest. India and Switzerland have a strong relationship based on shared values of democracy and rule of law. Over the years, economic ties have become multifaceted with annual bilateral trade reaching around USD 20 billion last financial year.

The Ministers took stock of progress made in key areas of interest such as trade & investment, education, information technology and tourism. Closer cooperation in the areas of skill development, renewable energy, traditional Indian medicine and climate change has the potential of mutual benefit and positive contribution at the global level.

Following on Indian government's drive to curb black money, the Ministers discussed the activation of Automatic Exchange of Information. A review was undertaken on the progress on Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement which India and the European Free Trade Area countries are currently negotiating. The two Ministers reiterated their strong commitment to early finalization of the Agreement while showing flexibility on each other's concerns.

Swiss affinity for Indian culture and Indian fascination for Swiss scenic backdrops for popular cinema is an iconic combination. Switzerland recognizes Ayurveda as a system of medicine. The two Ministers had detailed discussions on making Ayurveda more prevalent in Switzerland. The aspect of enhanced people to people interactions through facilitation of tourist and business visas was also discussed at length.

Minister Cassis is scheduled to travel to Varanasi on 11 August 2018. The Minister would be visiting the Alice Boner institute. The Institute is named after a Swiss national Ms. Alice Boner who stayed in Varanasi for 40 years promoting art and cultural linkages between the two countries. Her sincere efforts were honored by the Government of India by conferring a Padma Bhushan on her. Minister Cassis is scheduled to depart India on 12 August 2018.

Berne
10 August, 2018