

Swiss minister discusses exchange of info with Swaraj

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 10

INDIA AND Switzerland on Thursday discussed the activation of Automatic Exchange of Information, as visiting Swiss Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis met External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj on Friday. This assumes significance in the wake of the government's campaign against black money.

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," a statement by the Ministry of External Affairs said.

Cassis, accompanied by senior officials of his ministry, is visiting India from August 8 to 12.

"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," the statement said.

Cassis is scheduled to travel to Varanasi on August 11 and visit the Alice Boner Institute there. The institute is named after Swiss national Alice Boner, who stayed in Varanasi for 40 years and promoted art and cultural linkages between the two countries. She had received a Padma Bhushan for her efforts.

According to the MEA statement, Cassis and Swaraj held "cordial" discussions on various aspects of bilateral ties as well as important regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest.

The ministers took stock of progress made in key areas of interest such as trade and investment, education, information technology and tourism.