

# Sushma to raise Choksi case with Antigua minister

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External affairs minister Sushma Swaraj is likely to raise the issue—of India's request for extradition of Punjab National Bank (PNB) scam-accused Mehul Choksi—with a minister in the Government of Antigua and Barbuda whom she is scheduled to have a bilateral meeting on Wednesday evening (New York time) on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly there.

India had earlier over a request to Antigua for extradition of Choksi who had earlier obtained citizenship of the Caribbean nation.

Antigua is examining India's request for extradition of Choksi, with New Delhi saying in August that an "extradition arrangement" already exists between the two countries as per the extradition acts of the two countries.

The Indian government's position is that there is already an existing facility between India and Antigua that "constitutes an extradition arrangement between India and Antigua and Barbuda under their (Antiguan) Extradition Act of 1993" which "provides the legal basis for extraditing offenders from each other's juris-

## EXTRADITION

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diction". On August 3, New Delhi had quietly issued a gazette notification that the provisions of the Extradition Act, 1962, "shall apply with respect to Antigua and Barbuda with effect from 2001 i.e. when Antigua and Barbuda notified India as Designated Commonwealth Country under the provision of its own Extradition Act".

This could enable New Delhi to seek extradition of Choksi from Antigua under this arrangement.

As per Antigua's own Extradition Act of 1993, "a fugitive may be extradited to a Designated Commonwealth Country or a State with which there are general or special arrangement or a bilateral treaty".

Significantly, the Antiguan Government way back in 2001 had then notified India as a "designated Commonwealth country".