



# The External Affairs Minister Smt Sushma Swaraj inaugurates first 'Videsh Bhavan'-Integrated Common Premises in Mumbai.

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Union Minister for External Affairs Smt. Sushma Swaraj inaugurated '**Videsh Bhavan**' - Integrated Common Premises, for all subordinate offices of Ministry, in Mumbai today. The Union Minister told that all the services (including passport services, consular services etc.) by the Ministry will be housed under single roof in the State Capital. This initiative is a step in direction to make citizen friendly 'door-step' service delivery and promote Good Governance. Fostering the spirit of co-operative federalism, Ministry of External affairs shall work in close coordination with State Governments based on concept of '**Pradesh-Mein-Videsh**'.

The Union Minister reiterated Government's commitment for effective and speedy service delivery. She highlighted that till 2014 only 77 Passport Seva Kendra were present in the entire country, however, now 251 Passport Seva Kendra are working in the country of which 235 have been made functional in last six months. Also, Rules and Acts have been reviewed and simplified to streamline procedures and make more relevant for the present times. Further, Union Minister emphasized that not only effective but sensitive and responsible approach is taken up by the Government, while quoting that more than 80,000 distressed Indians have been rescued from countries across the world in last three years.

As a first Pilot Project, four offices of Ministry of External Affairs in Mumbai, that is, Regional Passport Office, Protector of Emigrants Office, Branch Secretariat and Regional office of Indian Council for Cultural Relations have been assimilated and brought under one roof at the newly constructed modern, fully equipped, state of the art office with all amenities for the public at Bandra-Kurla Complex (BKC) in Mumbai.

Chief Minister of Maharashtra Shri Devendra Fadnavis also present at the occasion, congratulated for the initiative. He said that Mumbai, the economic and financial capital, has one of the strongest diplomatic communities and expressed the confidence this inaugural initiative shall strengthen the relationship with diplomatic community. He further added that students, young entrepreneurs will be benefitted with this integrated service delivery. The Chief Minister told that technology shall enable hassle-free procedures including that of the police verification and committed fullest of cooperation from the State Government.

Minister of State for Ministry of External Affairs, Gen. (Dr.) V.K. Singh (Retd.) also told that this integration of regional offices and services is in alignment with the Government's motto of 'Maximum Governance, Minimum Government'. This shall bring government closer to people and rationalization of resources can be achieved through such integration.

Shri Praful Patel, Administrator, UT of Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Shri Dyaneshwar Mule, Secretary to Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs, V. Mahadeshwar, Mayor of Mumbai, Diplomats and other senior officers were also present amongst the dignitaries.

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**RT/Videsh Bhavan**

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