



French parliamentary team on 2 day visit to P'chery from Dec 9

STAFF WRITER 12/7/2011 10:12:00 AM

Puducherry, Dec 7 (PTI): A four member French parliamentary team will arrive here on December 9 on a two day visit to the union territory.

French Consul General office release said that the team, attached to 'France India Friendship group' of French National Assembly (Lower House of French Parliament) and headed by Nicolas Forissier MP would meet Lt Governor Iqbal Singh on December 10.

It said the team would first arrive at Chennai on Dec 7 and interact with members of the southern chapter of Indo-French Chamber of Commerce and Industry. They would also visit major French enterprises like Michelin and Renault and meet the Chief Secretary on December 8.

After arriving in Puducherry on December 9, they would visit the French government run higher education institution French Lycee the next day.



FDI debate stirs interest in visiting French MPs

STAFF WRITER 12/6/2011 3:31:00 PM

New Delhi, Dec 6 (PTI) On a visit to India, a group of French MPs are "watching with interest" the heated debate here on allowing FDI in the retail, a move which could benefit companies like France-based Carrefour.

In their discussions with the India-France Parliamentary Friendship Group presided over by BJP MP Yashwant Sinha, the French delegation led by Nicolas Forissier were keen to know about India's strategy vis-a-vis China.

During the discussions, Forissier said the French side got to know the various aspects of the "heated debate" on FDI in retail and underlined that French companies like Carrefour were looking forward to develop partnerships in India.

"I can understand, it is not easy to change a system that has been working in India for years," Forissier said.

He was quick to add that the visiting MPs did not have any judgement to give on the internal debate. However, Forissier said more and more French companies should develop partnerships in India which would be among the top three economies in the world in the future.

The delegation called on Lok Sabha Speaker Meira Kumar yesterday.

Forissier is leading a delegation comprising Jean Launay, Christian Blanc and Jean-Francois Mancel on a six-day visit to India during which they will also tour Bengaluru, Chennai and Puducherry.

Asked about the Rafale bid for Indian Air Force contract for 126 medium multi-role combat aircraft, Forissier said he was confident that the French company would be successful.

"We are very confident because we believe that we have offered the best plane which is adapted to Indian needs," he said on the bids for the 126 MMRCA, winner of which is likely to be announced later this month. .

Launay, who belongs to the Socialist Party, was keen on getting to know about India's relations with its neighbours, particularly China.

In the course of his meetings, he also got India's perspective on its oil exploration activities in the South China Sea, which China claims to be its exclusive domain.

"Also of interest was the cooperation in nuclear energy and defence and especially the South China Sea on which I tried to get an assessment from my interlocutors today," said Launay, whose Socialist Party is in opposition in France.

With Europe in the grip of a financial crisis, the discussions here also focussed on its impact in India and possible ways to resolve it.

The MPs also exchanged views on the regulation of financial systems as a way out to solve the Eurozone crisis.

The visiting MPs were appreciative of the selection process adopted by India for the defence deals and in the field of nuclear cooperation.

"The selection processes are serious and transparent. This frankness has been the hallmark of Indo-French relationship," Forissier said.

He said the delegation would also tell the French government the views of the Indian side on the issue of turbans worn by Sikhs residing in France.

Forissier said that the issue of turbans and ban on wearing a burqa were separate and should not be mixed.

"The wearing of burqa raises questions on identity of the face for security reasons. This does not concern the Sikhs. We can find a solution," he said.



France-India Friendship Group to visit Pondy Puducherry | Monday, Dec 5 2011 IST

The France-India Friendship Group of the French National Assembly (Lower House of French Parliament) will visit Puducherry this week.

According to a release from the French Consulate here today, the group will be led by Mr Nicolas Forissier, Member of Parliament, former Minister of State and President of India France Friendship Group. The group will include Mr Christian Blanc, Member of Parliament, Mr Jean Francois Mancel, MP and Jean Launay, MP. They would be accompanied by parliament official Ms Noemie Zins.

The team which will reach Chennai on the evening of December 7, will meet prominent members of the Southern Indo-French Chamber of Commerce and Industry and visit major French investors like Michelin Renault. The team will have a working meeting with the Tamil Nadu Chief Secretary at 1700 hrs on December 8.

It will reach Puducherry on December 9 and visit several French institutions here. It will also take a tour of the town. The members will call on Lt Governor Iqbal Singh on December 10 before leaving Puducherry in the afternoon.

-- (UNI) --



French MPs say their companies eager to do business in India

New Delhi, Dec 5: Describing India as a great emerging power, a group of visiting French MPs today said it would like more and more companies of their country to be in India once the FDI in the retail sector was allowed.

India was going to be among first two or three countries of the world and it needed a lot of partnerships, said Nicolas Forissier, President of the France-India friendship group of the French National Assembly, talking to reporters here.

"We have companies that look forward to partnership with Indian companies and want to develop commerce that can lead to more benefit for the people," said the French MP.

He said he discussed the issue with his meetings with Indian leaders, but added that allowing FDI or not was an internal debate of the country.

The French MPs today met Speaker Meira Kumar and Mr Yashwant Sinha, MP and President of the India-France Parliamentary Friendship Group.

Replying to question on problems in France's nuclear cooperation with India, especially in the context of the opposition to the Jaitapur power plant, Mr Forissier said they expected the files would move fast, and they got "no negative" signs regarding this in New Delhi.

The French MP said the aim of their mission in India was to achieve a greater understanding of the country and its situation and forge deeper ties with the people and government of the two countries. He was of the view that Parliamentary diplomacy can do a lot in reaching the message of its across to the people of other nations, and also in understanding the situation of other countries.

For example, he said that during his discussion with India leaders here, he developed a new understanding of the issue of Sikh Turban, which has been banned in his country under a law that does not allow wearing religious symbols in schools.

"Never before we understood the issue in this light," said Mr Forissier.

When asked whether, he would make some recommendations to his government on allowing Sikhs to wear turban in schools, the French MP said he would certainly tell his Government what was the real problem of the Sikhs.

The Friendship Group that includes Mr Jean Launay, Vice President, Christian Blanc and Jean-François Mancel is on a six-day visit to India from December 4 to 10 December 2011.

The delegation will also travel to Bengaluru, Chennai and Puducherry, where they would meet Dr Iqbal Singh, Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry as well as other Indian dignitaries.

The delegation is also scheduled to meet with Indian and French industrialists.

--UNI