

France to open visa desk in Ahmedabad in June, says envoy

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PITCHING itself as the gateway to "Europe", France on Wednesday announced a new visa desk in Ahmedabad. The new desk, likely to be operational from June, would be offering Schengen Visas, said

François Richier, French Ambassador to India.

The Schengen Visa is the representative of the collective of 26 European countries that have mutually decided to eliminate passport and immigration controls at their joint borders.

"With the French Embassy issuing close to 90,000

visas in India last year, there is a significant chunk arising from Gujarat... We felt that it was unfair that people here have to travel all the way to Mumbai to get consular services and through this desk we will be offering the Schengen Visa so people can travel to Europe... We have also met with some

Gujarati firms from the engineering sector today, that are looking at investing in France and acquiring some cutting-edge technology from there and replicate the same in India," said Richier during a press meet on Wednesday.

Kicking off his Gujarat trip on Tuesday from Vadodara.

On Wednesday, he visited the solar panels on the Narmada canal and met CM Anandiben Patel and evinced the interest of French firms in investing in Gujarat's plans of having a defense park. Later he also delivered a speech on climate change at IIT Gandhinagar.