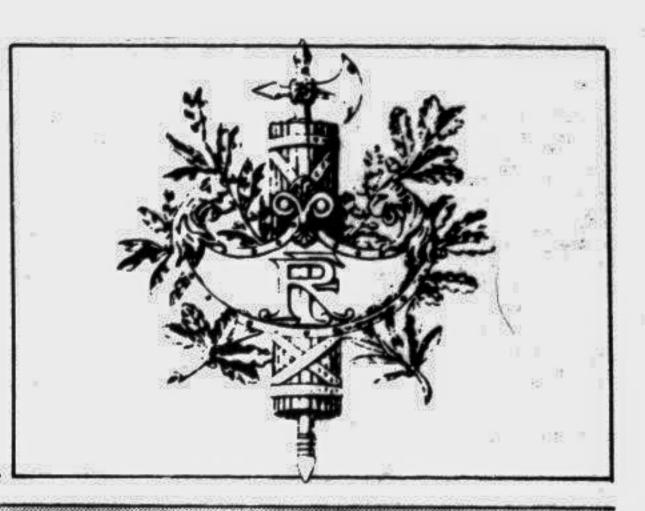
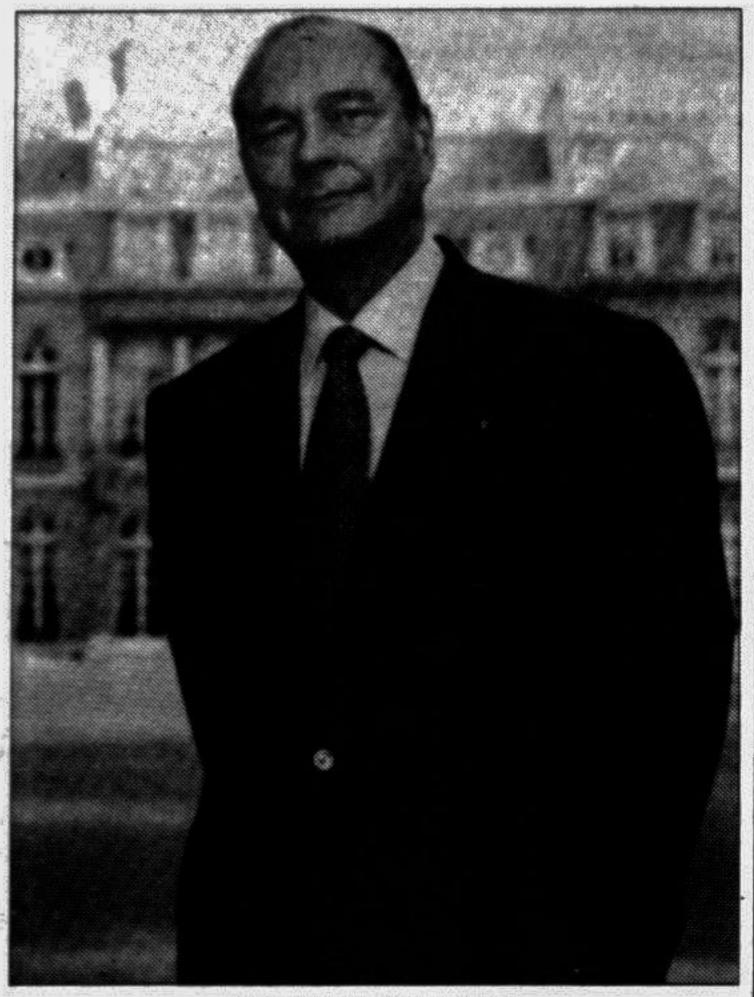


# Bastille Day The National Day of France

July 14, 1996

The Baily Star





JACQUES CHIRAC **President of France** 

## The Ombudsman of the Republic

The ombudsman is called the "mediateur" in French and is also known as the defender of the people or the parliamentary commissioner. This free intercessor tries to find an amicable solution to differences opposing citizens and the administration.

#### by Pierre Albert Lambert

N the earlier 70s, the only recourse to contest a decision or the behaviour of official departments was the law courts. But the activities of local authorities and public firms and companies (regional and departmental ones, the Social Security, the Electricity generating company, the Railways, etc) continued to develop while criticism of the management of the "state monster"

The administration calmed any qualms it may have had by considering that the dissatisfied user already had the legal system through which to

assert his rights. This may well have been true but entering on a court case is quite a difficult operation for many people and its cost in time and money does not justify all the lapses of the public services.

Hence the idea to introduce a "Mediateur de la Republique" (ombudsman) whose area of competence and responsibilities were to be drawn up by a law in 1973. The nonrenewable mandate of this high dignitary, appointed by the President of the Republic in a cabinet meeting, lasts 6 years. His appointment is irrevocable and he is totally inde-Continued on page 8

## The 14th July: The History of a National Feast-day for the People

In 1880, the Third Republic gave France a national feast-day, the 14th July, in memory of the storming of the Bastille on 14th July 1789. This commemoration, whose purpose was to unite all the French around an altar to the mother country, was also a throw-back to the Fete of the Federation of 14th July 1790, a symbol of national reconciliation. The popular merry-making to which it gave rise,

N 21st May 1880, Ben jamin Raspail, the parliamentary represen-tative for Paris, introduced the following bill: "The Republic adopts the 14th July as its national annual feast-day." The proposal was adopted by the Chamber of Deputies on 8th of

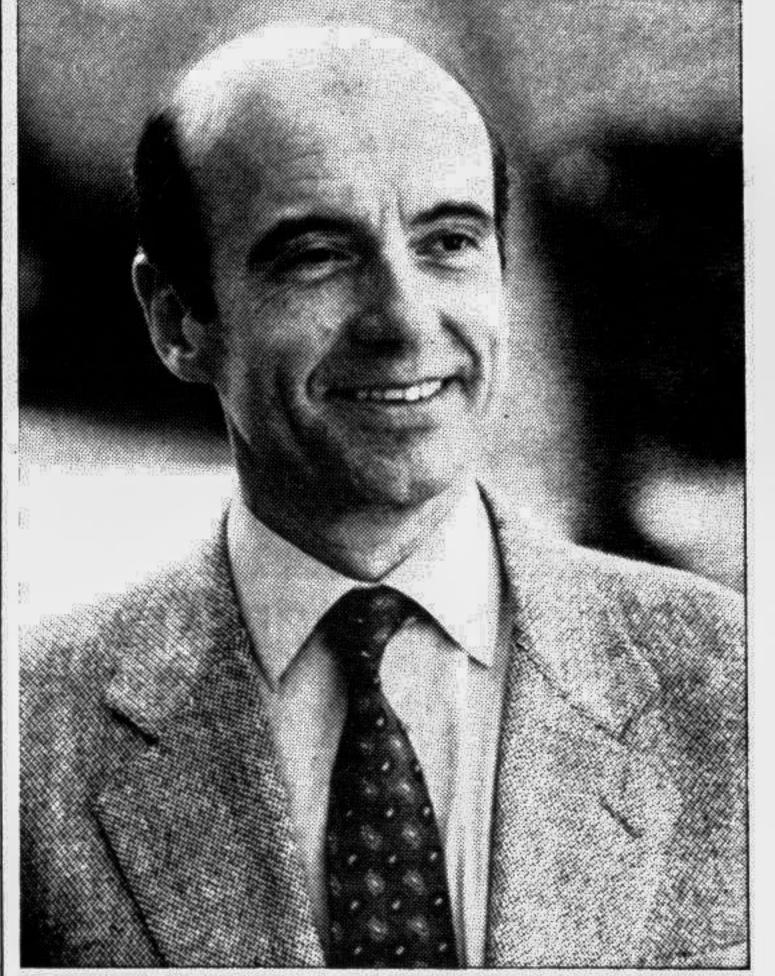
### by Michel Desforges

draw up the programme for the day so that this public

June, ratified by the Senate on holiday would take on a the 29th June and decreed as national character right from a law on the 6th July while the its first year. Secular cere-Minister of the Interior had monies in schools, the already set up a commission to inauguration of republican statues, the distribution of provisions to inhabitants, illu-

minations, bell-ringing, deco-ration with flags and bunting, and reviewing of the troops was encouraged throughout France, according to the budgetary means of the municipal-ities and their good will. Indeed, the participation of the army was to bring together all those afflicted by the loss of Alsace and Lorraine as a result of the disaster of Sedan which had led to the capitulation of the French army to the Prussians in 1870 and to the signature of the Treaty of Frank furt on 10th May 1871. Towns which had a conser-

vative majority were naturally reluctant to celebrate a securepublican "ideology' which their town councillors rejected. Monarchists and Catholics saw the Revolution as a vile act of history and they considered the day of 14th July 1789 more as a drama than an epic. They refused to see the conquest of freedom Continued on page 9



**ALAIN JUPPE Prime Minister of France** 

MESSAGE

It is a great and most genuine pleasure for me to celebrate for the first time in Bangladesh the French National Day with you all. This 14th of July which marks the 207th anniversary of the French Revolution is also the summoning of the new Parliament following the election of 12th of June last. It is a matter of pleasant coincidence.

This event is also the occasion to recall the excellence and ancientness of the bonds that unite our two countries.

The commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the Independence of Bangladesh coincides this year with that of the 20th anniversary of the death of the writer and politician Andre Malraux. The action of this great man at the side of the Freedom Fighters at a dramatic but aspiring moment for the people Bangladesh testifies the keen interest of France for the independence of this country and its sovereignty and this is a notion to which our two nations are strongly tied-up.

From the time of the emergence of Bangladesh as an Independent country, the people of France have always shown their solidarity with the people of Bangladesh and stood beside them during the difficult moments. This is why France has played a key role in the implementation of a plan for flood control which is expected to contribute in limiting the devastating effects. It has also intervened to relieve the people falling victim of cataclysms that striked the country.

Within the international organisations, France strives to do the best to involve its partners in a wide ranging policy of development aid and alleviation of the debt burden of the underprivileged countries. This was still the case during the recent G-7 Summit held at Lyon. President Jacques Chirac has personally apprised Prime Minister Mrs Sheikh Hastna of the results of this Summit and assured her that he would be following up the resolutions taken

The financial and commercial relations between our two countries are opening up. The exchanges during these recent years have shown a sharp rise on both sides. France is becoming an important outlet for the Bangladeshi products, more particularly the garments. The French cooperation based on an annual financial protocol aims at creating or reinforcing the infrastructures not only in Dhaka but also in the countryside including Chittagong, Sylhet and Khulna for the benefit of the entire popu-

But the ties between France and Bangladesh are also cultural. Good number of artists from Bangladesh have visited France and some of them are settled there. A film "Chaka" directed

#### Mrs. Renee Veyret

by a Bangladeshi film maker won the first prize in October 1994 at the Dunkerque Cinema Festival and was commercially distributed and shown in the cinema halls in France.

Besides the dynamic presence of the Alliances Française of Dhaka and Chittagong that provide an excellent cultural meeting point between our two countries. I would like to mention the cooperation that unite us in the field of archaeology at the site of Mahasthangarh. The cooperation in the worldwide combat against the narcotics and terrorism may also be underlined here.

At this moment when Bangladesh is having a new Government. France intends to pursue and renew the dialogue with its leaders. The visits at higher level should be resumed and increased following the visits of the Director General of Asia of the French Foreign Ministry and of the special envoy of President Chirac during the first half of the current year.

I personally will do my best to further reinforce the excellent relationship and coopera tion existing between our two countries and take the opportunity to extend my own greetings to the people of Bangladesh.

Renee Veyret

Ambassador of France to Bangladesh

## Fireworks a Must for the 14th July

Which French citizen could possibly imagine celebrating the event which was to open the doors of a new era for France, without the splendour and blaze of fireworks?

#### by Pierre Albert Lambert

IREWORKS seemingly go back to mysterious China in the Middle Ages. Mandarin scientists are believed to have developed black powder, an explosive mixture of wood-charcoal, saltpeter and sulphur, which was first of all put to military

However, the date and the place where the first firework display was held in Europe remain a mystery. The oldest record seems to be that of a "Dragon breathing red flames on the Thames" at the coronation of Elizabeth of York in 1487. In France, at the same period, one could watch "a fight between wild men and satyrs storming a fortress full of rockets and perched on an elephant."

For historians, the first firework-display worthy of the name took place in Paris on 5th April 1612 in Place Royale. today known as Place des Vosges, in the Marais district. The wedding between King Louis XIII and Anne of Austria was celebrated with a mock

war with the help of bombards and muskets firing blanks. From then on, celebrations with fireworks grew in num-

ber in Europe's capitals. Royal weddings and princely births. military victories and peace treaties were all accompanied by ever more sumptuous firework displays, particularly in the reign of Louis XIV. The Sun King noted that "people enjoy entertainment" and he made it an instrument in his domestic policy. "In that way," he said 'We control minds and But it was at the end of the

18th century, with "the ingenious inventions of the Ruggieris", five fireworks specialists who came from Bologna in Italy in 1739 that this art reached grandiose proportions in Europe. For a long time, this family thus practically held the monopoly for entertainments using firework displays.

They excelled in an art which, according to a writer of the time "charmed the eye without hurting it and appealed to the ear without terrifying it." The members of the Ruggieri tribe, who dabbled in all kinds of inventions and were chemists and men of the theatre as well as skilful flattering courtiers, soon turned into clever businessmen.

One of them became the "fireworks expert of the King and of the City of Paris." He was put in charge of organising the fabulous entertainment for the wedding of Louis XV's daughter with the infant of Spain. Later, one of the Ruggieri brothers crossed the Channel and put his skills to use in London for George II. A third brother was to make a name for himself at the court of the viceroy of Egypt.

From then on, the name of the Ruggieris was connected with the greatest events. These included Napoleon's wedding in 1810, the important events of the Second Empire and the Universal Exhibition of 1937. Recently. they were involved in the illuminations for the bicentenary of the Independence of the

Continued on page 10

## Warmest Felicitations

The Government and the Friendly People of France on the occasion of their National Day



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## An Unprecedented Record for French Foreign Trade

The future looks bright for foreign trade in France which reinforces its position among the leading powers for world exports.

### by Pierre Albert Lambert

N 1995 France's balance of trade crossed the historic line of 104.5 billion francs of surplus (20.9 billion dollars), an increase of more than 20% over the year before. Exports rose by 9.2% and amounted to 1,427 billion francs (285.4 billion dollars) and imports by 7.9% to 1.322.5 billion francs (264.5 billion dollars). French exports account for 22% of the country's gross domestic product

Managers at the ministry delegated to Finance and Foreign Trade consider the steady improvement in this area as a sign of the competitiveness of French firms, their ability to adapt to foreign markets and the diversity of the offer suited to meet international demand. The excellent performance obtained on the world markets reflects, they consider, "the dynamism and health of an economy which, over the last three years, has managed to withstand unfavourable circumstances", in particularly perturbing monetary fluctuations, outside the European Union, with the dollar, and within the Union with the lira. the pound and the peseta.

Good Sectors and Others Nineteen ninety-five was characterised by five phenom-

There was strong growth in the surplus in consumer durables which rose from 16 billion francs (3.2 billion dollars) in 1992 to more than 59 billion francs (11.8 billion dollars) in 1995. The sale of the European aircraft, Airbus 107 played an important part in this result.

The farming surplus increased to attain 20 billion francs (4 billion dollars). Cereal exports rose by 10% thanks to the re-opening of

the Chinese market. Wine ex-

ports (up by 5%) followed the same pattern. Moreover, the surplus in the food-processing industry was in excess of 31 billion francs (6.2 billion dollars). France thus maintains her position as the second largest exporter in the world for agricultural produce after the United States and she ranks in first position for pro-

cessed foods. The usual deficit in expendable consumer items fell sharply. In one year, it went down from 9 billion francs (1.8 billion dollars) to less than 5 billion francs (1 billion dollars). This is due to the sales of pharmaceuticals and perfumery. The deficit in the electronics and domestic appliances sectors also fell considerably. However, in the automobile and transport sector the situation was less favourable. The trade surplus, which amounted to 31 billion francs (6.2 billion dollars) in 1994, fell to 26 billion francs

(5.2 billion dollars). These good results were accompanied by a lessening of the energy bill, owing to the fall in the dollar. In this area, the traditionally heavy deficit was brought down to just un-der 59 billion francs (11.8 billion dollars), after 65.5 billion francs (13.1 billion dollars) in

1994. The Dollar Effect and the Appreciation of the Yen

The geographical results of France's imports and exports reveal that her main partner is the European Union. 65% of France's trade is with it. In 1995, intra-European trade grew more rapidly than the whole of foreign trade. The balance, which was positive for Prance, amounted to 37 billion francs (7.4 billion dollars). It

Continued on page 8

## National Day of The Republic of France

Me extend our heartiest felicitations on the occasion of the "National Bay "of the Republic of France

Me acknowledge on this occasion the kind co-operation of the French Government extended to us in connection with different Construction Projects in Bangladesh

Shaheedullah and Associates Ltd. Architectural & Engineering Consultant

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