



NATIONAL DAY OF FRANCE



SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

JULY 14, 2002



Jacques Chirac
President of the Republic of France



Jean-Pierre Raffarin
Prime Minister of the Republic of France

Creative holidays

Taking advantage of one's holidays in France to learn a handicraft or an artistic activity is a good way to discover the traditions of a region and to return with an original creation.

SYLVIE THOMAS

EVERY year, France, which is the number one tourist destination in the world, receives 67 million foreign tourists, but, apart from the most visited sites, Paris, the French Riviera and the Châteaux on the Loire, and far from the crowds, France also offers places off the beaten track where you can relax while learning and developing a handicraft or an artistic activity. Everybody is familiar with France's prestigious products such as Limoges porcelain and Grasse perfume but people rarely realise that they can make them themselves. Yet this dream is within everybody's reach, including beginners, thanks to courses offered by local craftsmen. It is a way of complementing a tourist holiday and astonishing friends back home. Knives and boats, vectors of cul-

ture: The wild plateau of Aubrac, in the Aveyron region, is famous for the legendary Laguiole knife. Now, under the guidance of a professional knife-maker, you can make your own. You will choose the material for your handle, horn, boxwood, heather-root, rosewood or deer antler, and then you will assemble the spring, the bolster and the blade and finish it off with engraving, decorating and polishing. If you are more attracted by the sea, Douarnenez, in Brittany, is the centre of maritime tradition. The professional trainers of the Ateliers de l'Enfer workshop teach boat enthusiasts how to make decorative skills or model boats out of wood. You can choose to make a figure-head or dinghy, or discover the secret of ships in bottles.

Refined works of art: Another time-honoured tradition is porcelain, which is made in Limoges, in the

Haute-Vienne department. François Ville-Goueix, a painter, enamel worker, modeller and porcelain decorator will receive you in his studio and show you the various techniques of painting on porcelain. You will decorate a white porcelain object and, at the same time, you will be able to enjoy a free visit to the National Porcelain Museum. Another technique made available to all is that of sculptors and potters who have chosen Vallauris, in the Alpes-Maritimes département, as the capital of ceramics. Picasso himself

decorated a chapel there. There, in that creativity-inducing atmosphere, the School of Fine Arts offers courses in pottery, model-making, and turning for adults and children, with its own teachers. One imagines that glass-blowing is reserved for professionals and yet, in Biot, on the French Riviera, master glass-blowers, faithful to the Provençal tradition of glass-making will teach you about the tools and techniques of this craft. In the setting of magnificent glassworks, whose

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Dominique De Villepin
Foreign Minister of the Republic of France

MESSAGE

ON the 14th of July, France celebrates her National Day in remembrance of the storming of the Bastille in 1789 which put an end to absolute Monarchy and of the Festival of Federation a year later which symbolises the unity of the nation.

This special day is a good occasion to recall how ancient and strong are the bonds which link France and Bangladesh, starting with the first French travellers who came to this part of Bengal as early as in the last years of the 17th century to the Liberation war in 1971 which saw France siding with the people of this country fighting for their independence. Among the supporters of your cause was André Malraux whose centenary was celebrated in November last year with a series of cultural events in the two Alliances Françaises of Dhaka and Chittagong.

Since the last French National Day, in 2001, several achievements have confirmed the dynamism of our bilateral relations. The Saidabad water treatment plant, partly funded by France and realized by a consortium of French companies, is now completed and about to start functioning. A new consignment of French Food Aid was supplied six months ago in order to help easing the plight of the

poorest section of the Bangladeshi population. In a totally different field, it has to be mentioned that a new five year agreement for the cooperation in archeology was signed between our two governments in May: this is a recognition of the outstanding quality of the work done by our joint team in Mahasthangarh during the last ten years. A new project is now under consideration with the aim of assisting the National Museum of Bangladesh in modernising the display of its very rich collection of artworks. An exhibition of contemporary painters of Bangladesh will take place in October 2002 near Paris. In the meantime, we have pursued our cooperation in the fields of public administration, civil aviation and medicine.

As far as our bilateral trade is concerned, it must be stressed that, despite the global economic slowdown and the effects of September 11, Bangladesh exports to France have shown no sign of depletion.

The figures available for the first four months of the present year demonstrate a remarkable stability at a high level which makes France the 6th client for Bangladeshi goods. It is unfortunately not true for imports from my country which have continued to decrease. But I am convinced that more efforts on

our part could pave the way for more balanced exchanges and perhaps a new start in French investment here.

These are only a few examples of our deep and manifold relationship even if there is still ample room for further development. As a conclusion, I would like to reiterate my expression of friendship and respect for the people of Bangladesh and the confidence in the democratic future of this country and in its continued social and economic development.



Michel Lummaux
Ambassador of the Republic of France to Bangladesh

France at war against AIDS

Although in France the introduction of triple therapies has led to a clear advance in patient care, the epidemic has not yet stabilised, and there is even a tendency for vigilance to relax. In an attempt to remedy this situation, the government is relying on prevention, the foundation, together with access to screening and the support of sufferers, of the national policy to fight AIDS. In international terms, France is one of the countries most involved in the fight against the pandemic, in the face of which it advocates a global approach.

FLORENCE RAYNAL

MORE than 36 million people in the world today are living with the AIDS virus; almost 22 million have died of it; 13 million children have lost their mothers because of HIV... The litany of figures compiled by UNAIDS, the United Nations agency responsible for the fight against the epidemic, sends shivers up your spine. For the last twenty years, when this viral disease which invades and destroys the immune system was first described, the epidemic has ravaged every continent. However, sub-Saharan Africa is by far the area most affected since, with more than 25 million sufferers, it has 70% of those infected worldwide... in an area with barely more than 10% of the world population.

In France, while the figures are less alarming, the Ministry of Health nonetheless estimates that there are 120,000 persons currently known to be infected, and that there have been 36,000 deaths since the start of the pandemic. Nevertheless, in France there are five times fewer people dying from AIDS than in 1996, thanks to the appearance of new treatments: triple therapies. Even so, the epidemic situation has not stabilised: between 4 and 6,000 people are said to become infected each year and, since 1997, heterosexual transmission has predominated. Indeed, the proportion of people infected after homosexual sexual contact has reduced, as has that of injecting drug users. However, the number of women affected has rocketed -- in ten years, one woman for every seven men has risen to one for every three.

Prevention: a priority

With the spread of the epidemic, a policy to fight AIDS centred on prevention, access to screening and support of sufferers, has developed gradually, bringing together the government, research, professionals and community networks. In the area of prevention of HIV, the State budget totalled 44.24 million euros (290.2 million francs) in 2000, which in particular has made it possible to finance various campaigns orchestrated by the French Health Education Committee (CFES), campaigns that are all the more necessary because we are seeing a relaxation of vigilance.

Indeed, the CEFS considers that: "The hope aroused by advances in treatment and the perception of an epidemic under control seems to be leading to a fall in vigilance which may have consequences on prevention behaviour, with the risk being perceived as lesser."

Yet while the length and quality of life of sufferers has greatly improved and multiple therapies rapidly reduce viral particles in the blood to an undetectable level and partly restore the immune system at every stage of the illness, this should not obscure the fact that these treatments are highly toxic.

To remind people of the permanence of infection and the gravity of the disease and to encourage the adoption of risk avoidance behaviour for oneself and others (such as wearing a condom, especially in cases where there are several part-

ners, still more as concerns polygamists), the CEFS has set up a three year programme combining campaigns directed at the general public and actions targeted at priority groups, with the support of special interest media, local groups and intermediaries from communities.

Women at greater risk

Thus, in March 2001, a campaign directed at women was launched. Its purpose was to inform women of their biological vulnerability -- from man to woman, the risk of transmitting the virus is from three to eight

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