

France in brief

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 French flavour that has influenced many of the best directors everywhere.
 Culture and leisure are important aspects of French life: French people spend about 10% of their income on it. Over 60,000 titles are published yearly and there are ten national dailies and 65 regional ones, which are important opinion makers. Television is of course very popular with an average of 3h15 per person per day and no political career is now possible without a good televised image. About half of the homes are connected to Internet. Over 210 films are produced and some 27,000 artists give more than 50,000 performances a

year. Sport play a pre-eminent part with over ten millions practitioners and a much wider audience for professional sports, mainly football and rugby. Festival, specially in summer, are the highlights of the French Cultural life: let us just mention the Avignon Festival of the performing arts or the Festival of Cannes for the cinema. Some other festivals, such as the Music Festival at the beginning of the summer, are now world events: the Music Festival was also celebrated in Dhaka thanks to the Alliance française and the Dhaka University.

ECONOMY
 France is the world's fourth largest

economic power and the leading agricultural power in Europe together with the world's second largest exporter of food products. Even though it has few natural resources in gas and oil, France manages to cover 50% of its energy needs thanks to nuclear powered electricity generation, its capacity being the second worldwide. France remains the fourth manufacturing power in the world, with an industry that covers the all spectrum of possible products, but the service sector now accounts for some 75% of jobs. Among the numerous domains where France has a recognized capacity are aeronautics and aerospace, telecommunications, auto-

mobiles, chemicals, civil engineering and, of course, a long tradition in fashion and luxury goods.
 France is part of the European Union and now part of the Euro zone, thus a member of the most important economic and financial bloc of the world.
 France is a magnet destination for tourists. It is the leading destination in the world with more than 77 million (11% of the total) tourists a year, that is to say, more than the French population! This is made easier by one of the densest and most efficient transport network in the world, including a wide network of high-speed trains known as TGV.

RESEARCH
 In keeping with a long tradition, French science is at the forefront of competitiveness. The quality of French scientists is acknowledged worldwide. France's position is strongest in mathematics, where it ranks just behind the United States. This excellence has given France an eminent role in many applied science areas. In return, the interactions with other scientific disciplines, such as physics, computer sciences, chemistry, biology and economics enrich the development of mathematics.
 Highly skilled teams work on the design of tools for developing software and cryptology, which are bound to play a key role in tomorrow's electronic world and economy. French scientists also enjoy a strong position in modelling, which has become a critical tool for science dealing with increasingly complex phenomena such as fluid mechanics, plasma physics or climatology.
 In physics, three French Nobel prizes attest France's tradition of excellence in recent years. This know how is critical for the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER), which is going to be built in France and will benefit the world community studying thermonuclear fusion reaction.
 The aerospace industry deserves a special mention since it devotes 15% of its turnover to research. This effort is now structured on a European scale with EADS (European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company), which ranks second in the world and includes Airbus industries and its new A380 jumbo plane. France has also a leading role in the Ariane space venture which enables the Ariane 5 rockets, launched from the French Guyana, to carry 60% of western civilian satellites into space.

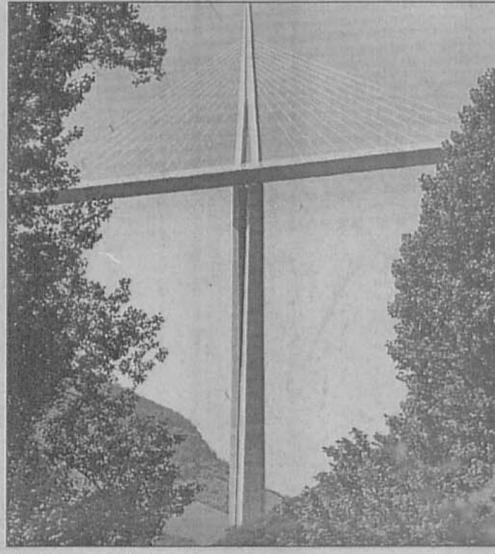
Medical research is also at the forefront of France's achievement. Among many others, the Institut Pasteur has been famous for over a century for its work on preventing infectious diseases. With its worldwide network of twenty one partners, it is a research leader with no equivalent anywhere in the world; It was at the Pasteur Institut that the team working under Professor Montagnier first identified the AIDS virus in 1983.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
 France is an ancient European nation that gave birth to the ideals enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It always had an influence on world affairs and continues to do so even now.
 France puts a very high value on its independence. General De Gaulle, in the nineteen-sixties, underpinned this principle with the development of an independent and credible defence capability based on a nuclear deterrent. In the same vein, France took some spectacular diplomatic initiatives regarding the Middle East and Asia, proving that France maintained full control over its analysis of events and its foreign policy choices. This principle is at the core of the rejection of an excessively bipolar world.
 Most of today's challenges cut across national borders and France prefers to meet them through multilateral cooperation and by upholding the law and international bodies. France's actions are guided by the responsibility that comes with its international standing as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, a member of the G8 group of the world's most powerful economies and a member of the leading specialised cooperation institutions.
 Recent events notwithstanding, European integration is and has always been at the heart of French foreign policy ever since 1945. It may be recalled that two Frenchmen, Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet, initiated the European project. The European Union is an ongoing process that France firmly believes in. Inside Europe, a special mention can be made of the France-German relation that, after two destructive world wars, is now a close and confident one embodied in the *Traité de l'Elysée* signed in 1963.
 Many issues, such as poverty, environmental protection, proliferation and terrorism, require multilateral consultations and actions. The United Nations, which is the only universal body, is the best place for it. The UN is also the primary source of international law. The Security Council is still the only body that can legitimise the use of force.

France makes every effort to support the UN's action everywhere in the world, including its action for peacekeeping, security and human rights. French troops take part in most UN peacekeeping operations and frequently work alongside Bangladeshi troops wearing the blue helmet. France is the fourth largest contributor to the various budgets of the UN and provides more than its share (6.5% of the UN budget in contrast with 5.5% of the world GDP).
 France is a leading player in international development assistance and the most generous donor of all leading industrialised countries with the aim of having development assistance reach 0.5% of its GDP in 2007. Most of this assistance goes to countries having a privileged relation with France, mainly in Africa and South-East Asia. About 30% of development funds are given through the European Commission and other multilateral institutions. Humanitarian aid is channelled mostly through NGOs. Some French NGOs are world known, such as "Médecins sans Frontières" or "Handicap International".



The French Airbus



Another view of Millau Bridge

Straight leg project

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 affected by rickets.
 Both the below five years children of Ismail at Dhoharpara under Khatabzom Union have been suffering from rickets and being treated by the help of the Straight Leg Project.
 Rajash Khanna Shushil, field worker of the Straight Leg Project, runs from one corner to another corners of the big island everyday to look after gradual improvements of the patients.
 "Intake of at least 250 mg calcium per day, intake of leafy vegetables, little fishes with bones and dairy products could be the best way to increase daily intake of calcium for preventing rickets," said Abidur Rahman, in-charge of the Cox's Bazar district branch of SARPV.
 Gaelle Lionel, an orthopaedic shoemaker, flew from France to a

remote village of Chakaria under Cox's Bazar district as a volunteer of the France NGO named KDM. During his three months stay he trained up some locals in orthopaedic shoemaking.
 Although the price of the orthopaedic shoes is low, it still remains expensive for most of the poor patients and lack of professional equipments and tools is another difficulty in making orthopaedic shoes in Bangladesh, said Gaelle Lionel who retired from French Army in 2003 as military shoe maker.
 Just before his departure for his home, Gaelle Lionel commented on Bangladesh: Bangladesh is a beautiful country and people of this country are always smiling and ready to help you in every case.

Shukrawar Hossain is Press Attache of the Embassy of France in Dhaka.

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