

NATIONAL DAY OF FRANCE



François HOLLANDE
President of France

Ambassador's Message

IT is my great pleasure and honour to convey for the first time my best wishes to the people of Bangladesh and my warmest regards to the French community in this country, on the occasion of the French National Day.

Bastille Day, as it is often called, commemorates the fight of the people of Paris in 1789 for destroying a prison that was, by itself, the symbol of the arbitrary power of the monarchy. What the French are really observing today is not only the storming of the Bastille, but also the "Fête de la Fédération", an event that a year later consecrated the unity of our country and built the foundations of our nation. On 14 July 1790, delegates from all the provinces (of France) flocked to Paris to proclaim their allegiance to a single common nation. Therefore, today's commemoration has also to be seen as a symbol of national reconciliation.

On that occasion, the values upon which our democratic system is now founded, namely "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity", were proclaimed. Going far beyond the French territory, this motto was meant to be universally shared.

On the basis of such globally acclaimed democratic values, we recently experienced a major political changeover in France with the election of Mr. François Hollande as new President of the Republic. A new government has been set up, with M. Jean-Marc AYRAULT as Prime minister, and a new Parliament was elected. President Hollande has pledged himself to fight against the economic crisis, reduce the debt and boost economic growth, together with the other countries of the European Union.

As far as the French foreign policy is concerned, the bilateral relations between Bangladesh and France won't be affected,

because our priorities remain unchanged, and France will always stand by her friends.

The friendly relationship between France and Bangladesh has existed now for more than 40 years. Historic bonds between our two countries have continued to further strengthen from a bilateral standpoint, since the recognition of the independence of Bangladesh by France on February 12, 1972.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the government of Bangladesh for having honoured the late French Minister for Culture and great philosopher, Mr. André Malraux, for his outstanding contribution during the liberation war in 1971. In March, this year, he was awarded the prestigious award titled "Friends of Honour".

Concerning our privileged relationship with Bangladesh, France is contributing to the development of this country by co-funding projects run by the European Union. I am also pleased to inform you that the French Development Agency (AFD) is going to resume its activities and directly finance programs of cooperation in Bangladesh later this year. Furthermore, we believe that in export-oriented countries like Bangladesh, trade is as important as aid. France represents the fourth largest export market for Bangladesh, with revenues amounting to more than Euros 1.4 billion.

For many years, major French companies have chosen to invest in this country. One of the best examples would probably be the Lafarge cement factory, which, putting aside gas sector, is one of the most important foreign investors in Bangladesh. The recent success obtained by Bangladesh for its territorial maritime boundaries could open new opportunities for French companies, but also allow to start government to government technical cooperation in this area

as well (exploration of the maritime resources; surveillance; port infrastructures etc.). And we certainly hope that many more French companies in many other sectors will also come and invest in Bangladesh.

These are some of the main reasons why Bangladesh and France are such close friends. On many international issues related to multilateralism, cultural diversity and the protection of the environment, both our countries share the same views. In particular, we believe that economic development and poverty eradication are at the heart of the fight against climate change and that financial assistance should be urgently provided to the most climate vulnerable countries like Bangladesh, to prevent major natural disasters.

With regard to climate change, France, together with EU, has already expressed its solidarity with the developing countries, particularly with the poorest and the most vulnerable. France reminded the necessity to limit global warming to 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to implement the Cancun Agreement, especially as regards transparency, mitigation, financing, adaptation, the spread of technologies and curbing deforestation.

Cultural cooperation between Bangladesh and France is also very important. Regarding the outstanding cultural heritage of this country, French and Bangladeshi archeologists are working together since 1993 on excavations at Mahasthangarh. During its last campaign, the joint mission made important discoveries, which will enlighten the history of one of the oldest cities in Bangladesh.

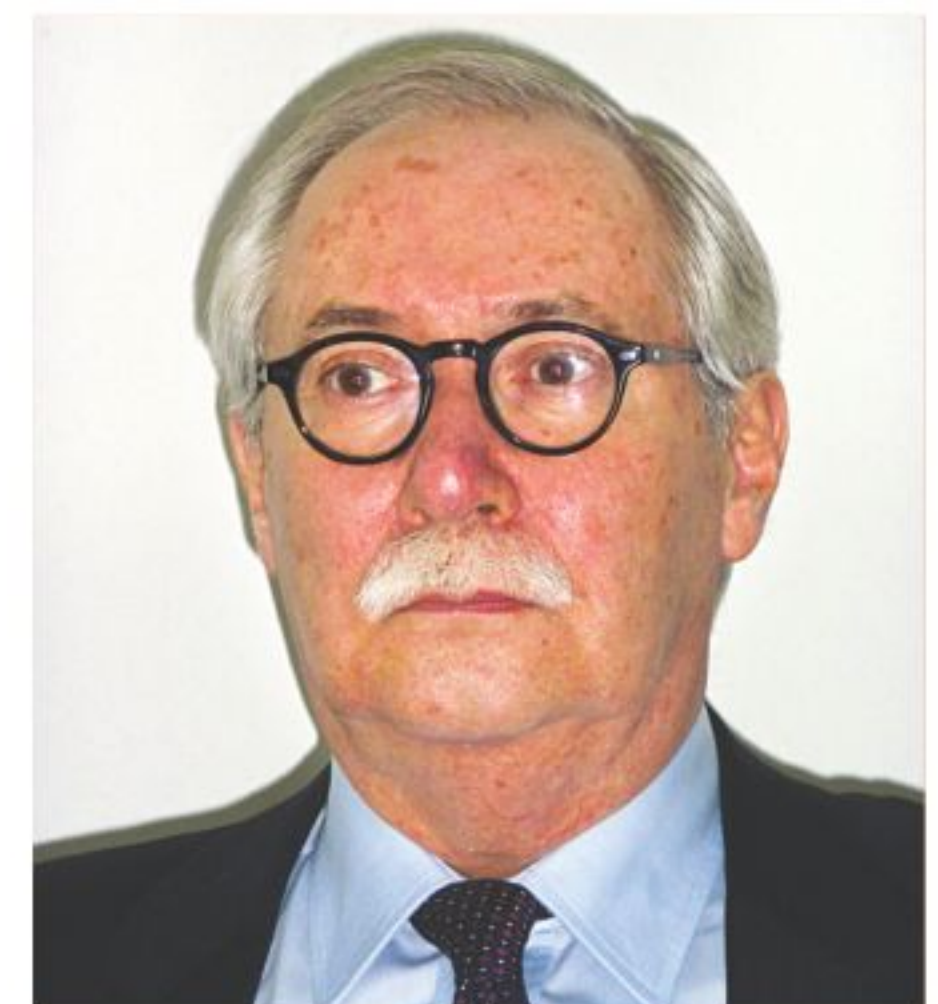
I should also mention that many talented artists, such as the sculptress Novera, the painter Shahabuddin Ahmed and the

recipient of the prestigious French Award (Knight) mime Partha Pratim Majumder, who have opted to settle down in Paris, contribute to showcase the richness of the multifaceted Bangladeshi culture in France.

Moreover, I wish to thank warmly the committees of Alliance Française de Dhaka and Chittagong, the French school, French NGOs and France-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) for their commitment in promoting the cooperation between our two countries.

Finally, on this gracious occasion, let me assure all that the French Embassy in Bangladesh will continue to further strengthen the friendly relations and actively promote the exchanges between our two countries. I wish every success and happiness to Bangladesh, France, and their people.

Long live France-Bangladesh friendship!



Michel TRINQUIER
Ambassador of France to Bangladesh

French NGOs in Bangladesh

SEVERAL French NGOs are operating in Bangladesh in various fields such as health, education, sanitation. Among them, Friendship is well established in the country since many years. It all started in 1994, when Yves Marre, a French sailor, sailed a river barge from France to Bangladesh to have it converted into a floating hospital to provide healthcare services to those who had limited or no access to healthcare. With the help of corporate sector funding from Unilever, who believed in Friendship's vision, Friendship were able

to progress and start its work in the remote nomadic islands (chars) of Northern Bangladesh. Today Friendship works in the most remote and vulnerable areas of Bangladesh, including the cyclone affected areas of Southern Bangladesh. Friendship provides now healthcare, hold nutrition and education programmes.

The French NGO Humani Terra has launched a partnership with Friendship in order to guarantee the surgical management by missions for Special Surgery when the other provides primary cares.



Several NGOs are working for the achievement of two MDGs related to the well-being of the children. Partenaires started its

branch Street children's Partners in 2001 when Maer Achol Shelter, a day/night shelter, has opened in Mirpur for street and slum children of Dhaka. The project targets the most vulnerable children, boys and girls, who stay, work, beg or live in the streets. The main goal is to raise the street children's economic condition with enhanced dignity. To reach that goal, the organization works for: the rehabilitation of the kids through medication and hygiene or psychological counselling; their socialization with formal and non formal education; their reinsertion through vocational training and job placement.

The NGO Les Amis des Enfants du Monde, which means "The Friends of the Kids of the World", supports local initiatives in the service of disadvantaged children who have the willingness to take themselves in charge. Six schools or orphanage, mostly in Chittagong like Don Bosco, supported since 1983, receive a financial help from "Les Amis des Enfants du Monde".

Aide Médicale et Développement ("Medical Aid and Development") work in Cox's Bazar with disabled children, whose disability is often due to poor nutrition and rickets. Handicap International is another French NGO which has been working in Bangladesh since 1997 to uplift the living standard, promote full and meaningful participation in development programs and activities, and to establish the rights of persons with disabilities.

The NGO Solinfo, which conducts in particular a project in Maer Achol shelter, supports education projects towards the children in various schools,

orphanages or hospitals. Initially focusing on computer training, the goals of Solinfo are now largely open to other actions.


The natural disasters faced by Bangladesh have

led several NGOs to launch missions here. Action Contre La Faim (ACF) has been present in Bangladesh since August 2007 with an intervention in Shariatpur District to respond to the

floods that blocked an important part of the country for more than six weeks and later on in Barguna District to respond to the Cyclone Sidr. The organization has maintained a



Disaster risk reduction program in Barguna. ACF helps the communities in defining contingency plan in case of disaster and in developing projects to limit

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La Fête Nationale

The Bastille Day initiated the reveille for the French Revolution. It reshaped the global landscape in science, art, literature, religion and politics which still remains a source of inspiration for the rest of the world.

Happy Bastille Day!

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