

Ambassador's Message

France and Bangladesh: a common history celebrated on our National Day

GREETINGS from the Embassy of France in Bangladesh!

It's my privilege and great honour to celebrate my first French National Day in Bangladesh, and to address the citizens of Bangladesh and my fellow citizens on this occasion.

14th of July is the French National Day. For all of us, French people, this date is known as the Bastille Day, in 1789, the day the common people decided to get rid of absolute monarchy. But 14th of July is also the day the French people tried to unite around the idea of a comprehensive commemoration of the Bastille Day, in 1790: at that time, the idea was to put an end to privileged and religious classes. This day is called the Federation fair. Hardly a few people know about it.

14th of July became our national day in 1880, under the Third Republic. It took a long time for our country to consider that France was a Republic and a united nation. Our motto is: "liberty, equality, fraternity". It is a fundamental point of our history, as a nation and as a State.

We, French people, love liberty. We love to be free to speak and to debate on everything. We barely agree. And we accept contradiction, considering that we prefer to die for other points of view to be expressed, rather than having a "pensée unique" (which means "single mindset") leading our lives.

We, French people, also consider that all human beings are equal. That's why our State, as an institution, is given the difficult job to get sure that everybody gets an equal opportunity to progress and contribute to the welfare of our global society.

And we, French people, consider that solidarity is the basis for the common progress of our nation. The rich have to contribute in order to help the poor. That's a very big challenge, all the more as the world has become global. That's why we adapt our national model to the global constraints, but without forgetting our values.

Here in Bangladesh, we support the national goal of being a middle income country in 2021. That's a dream and a goal, which will become reality within a stable and secure framework. We feel that Bangladesh is living a transition, and we want to be part of this transition. This is an exciting project.

We know that we are one of the many partners Bangladesh have, but we want to



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Ambassador of France to Bangladesh

develop a demanding relationship with Bangladesh.

We want to increase our presence here. We will soon have a new Embassy, the first French German collocated Embassy in the world. The French Agency for Development has re-opened an office in Dhaka two years ago. We have an economic department; we have two venerable institutions, the Alliance Française of Dhaka and the Alliance Française of Chittagong. Both of them have accompanied the inception of Bangladesh and have played a very important role, as our linguistic and cultural operator here in Bangladesh, even before the inception of the country.

A special demanding relationship with Bangladesh means no concession: our companies are high technological companies, reliable companies. This means that with French companies, no "bad surprise" will occur. We want to develop partnerships with Bangladesh on many projects: for the launching of the first Bangladeshi satellite, "Bangabandhu Satellite", the new water plant to provide Dhaka with drinkable water, the extension of the Chittagong Refinery that a French company had built 50 years ago...I am pleased to announce that this Embassy, along with the

France-Bangladesh Chamber of commerce and industry, will organize this year the French Trade Show on 27th and 28th of November, at the brand new Le Méridien Hotel. We also want to increase our relationships with our very longstanding partner in peacekeeping operations.

We also have a very important and common issue: climate change. France will host the 21st conference of parties for international climate negotiations. In France, we are convinced that our world has come to a turning point and that our global world is being challenged: either we are able to create a new world, free of greenhouse gas emissions, with low carbon strategies, in order to maintain the global increase of temperature below 2 degrees Celsius by the end of the century; or we may fail.

And a failure would be a disaster for humanity. We can observe what has happened in India during the last weeks: more than 2500 people died because of heat wave. Climate change is not an idea, or a scientific issue: it is our reality.

We must work together in order to build a new world. Governments have to create the policy frameworks in order to offer private sector and all citizens the opportunity to build a new society. Solutions already exist, but innovation, as well as public and private financing, has to be mobilized in order to promote solutions and expand their implementation.

Here in Bangladesh, we, French Embassy, through our local action, want to show that climate change can be an opportunity to change our ways of living, producing, consuming and assessing values. People have started to develop innovative solutions to tackle climate change. These solutions should become policies. Bangladesh is leading amazing projects in order to face climate impacts; reforestation, domestic solar panels... I thank Bangladesh for its longstanding involvement on climate change issues.

And there is one message: everybody should consider one question: what kind of world do we want to build for the future generations? There is no "plan B" because we have only one planet.

So let's work together to protect our planet. Vive le Bangladesh, Vive la France, and long live the friendship between France and Bangladesh!

Bangladesh and its people, especially in the sectors where our companies' excellence is proven around the world. That's the reason why we follow with a keen interest the development of the sectors of electricity, rail transportation, water treatment and all the environment related issues. Likewise, we support the French company THALES, which is the only one able to offer a fully integrated European offer for the Bangabandhu satellite project

and the major EPC company TECHNIP, which is keen to offer its best technology for the ERL2 project.

The positive political evolution of Bangladesh, its economic growth perspective, its people and the resilience of its businessmen, coupled with the evolution of its society, are reasons to think we have a lot of things to do together...and, as Narendra Modi recently said in Dhaka, we are just at the beginning of our journey.

Conference of Parties on Climate negotiations

WE are halfway through a year, 2015, during which the focus is on development and climate. These battles can be won only if we fight together: to tackle poverty and enable development, we must win the battle against climate change.

To do so, we need to build together an agreement in Paris that enables us to limit the rise of the planet average temperature of the planet less than 2°C, or 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, and adapt our societies to deal with the existing climate disruption.

It should set us on the path of a low-carbon transition which will allow everyone to benefit from sustainable development. This transition will - above all - be an opportunity to improve energy security, bring down the deficit, reduce poverty, and improve public health...

In our capacity as future presidency for COP21, the international framework for climate negotiations, we are working with all countries, transparently, to support the negotiating process towards an agreement everyone will be able to own. The many discussions we are having confirm that all countries want to achieve a universal agreement on the climate in December 2015.

As incoming presidency of the COP21, we are not supporting one specific solution, neither French nor European one. We are listening equally to all parties, in order to understand the concerns, the national situations and the expectations for each and every one of them, particularly the most vulnerable.

We envision that we should achieve, in December, a Paris Alliance for Climate, which should rely on four components:

The first, and most important one, is a universal and legally binding agreement. This agreement will have to deal equally with mitigation and adaptation, a priority for all countries which are already feeling the impact of climate disruption, sometimes in a tragic way. The agreement will also have to take into account everyone's responsibility



ties and capabilities. It will have to be on a long-term and establish a process of cooperation between us, so that we can reinforce our collective effort and progressively achieve a shared long-term goal.

National contributions (INDCs) that each country must publish before the Paris Conference. These contributions must present commitments on mitigating greenhouse gas emissions, and for those willing to do so, include adaptation plans. Nearly 40 countries have already presented them. The European Union is playing its part. We have - together with Germany, the United Kingdom, and many others - supported last year the adoption of ambitious European climate and energy objectives for 2030, among which the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% compared to 1990. This constitutes the European 'INDC' to the Paris Agreement.

To enable a global transition, we must also address financing. We must create confidence that the commitment made in Copenhagen in 2009 to mobilize \$100 billion a year by 2020 for developing countries (some of which will go through the Green Climate Fund) will indeed be honoured. More broadly, we must establish the rules and incentives to enable a profound redirection of public and private capital flows towards the low-carbon economy.

Finally, the fourth aspect of the Paris Alliance is the Lima-Paris Action Agenda, which aims to involve civil society and non-governmental actors (local authorities, businesses and voluntary organizations) to commit and strengthen the engagement of States, so as to reinforce our collective effort, particularly before 2020. Today is an opportunity to showcase many concrete actions and illustrate the cooperation between Governments and non-governmental actors. It shall also convey the message, right through to the Paris Conference, that the climate challenge represents economic and social opportunities, and that all civil society actors should get on board.

Economic and trade relations between Bangladesh and France

ECONOMIC and trade relations between Bangladesh and France are faring well. Bilateral exchange which topped 1, 3 billion € in 2012, exceeded 2, 1 billion € during the last 12 months. Our exports increased notably from approximately 100 M € in 2012, to more than 284 M € during the same period. But the bilateral trade balance is clearly in favour of Bangladesh, with a surplus of more than 1, 6 billion €. France is the second largest importer of RMG in the Eurozone, and in spite of a steady appreciation of the taka vis-à-vis the euro, our imports increased more than 27% during the first four months of this year.

Our country is happy to accompany the development of this strongly exporting industry which not only participates in the economic growth of the country, but which will as well contribute substantially to its social progress and to women empowerment. The Rana Plaza tragedy was felt sadly in France, and our country, along with others and in cooperation with the brands, is strongly involved in the efforts carried out by the factories owners, with the support of the government and of the ILO for a safer textile industry for its workers, more environment friendly and more inclusive in its approach of growth. Therefore, France participates in the "Better Work Bangladesh Program" piloted by the ILO.

The French Development Agency (AFD), present in Bangladesh for two years now, will be the leading player of the cooperation between our two countries. Its mandate of green and solidary growth has led it to concentrate its action on the sectors of environment, water treatment, energy and transport, and more globally on the fight against the impact of climate change. The RMG industry will not be absent of these concerns, as AFD wishes to support the remediation of textile factories by supplying soft loans to the industrialists committed to a sustainable and responsible growth strategy.

Our current investments are not up to the mark of our ambitions for Bangladesh. They consist of three industrial ventures, TOTAL, which cans and sells LPG, SANOFI, which has been present here since before independence, and finally the cement company LAFARGE, which manages a unique installation producing cement from limestone imported from India through miles long trans-border conveyor belt. The revision of the "Company Act" and the current reforms being implemented should make the legal and administrative business environment more secure and therefore more attractive to French investors. We cannot afford to be any longer out of this country, where you can spot an emerging middle class, which is engaged in major infrastructure projects, and which will join the rank of MIC in 2021, with the further ambition to become a developed country in 2041.


France is eager to put its technology at the service of




Our best wishes and heartiest felicitations to the friendly people and the Government of Republic of France on the occasion of their National Day on 14th July, 2015



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