



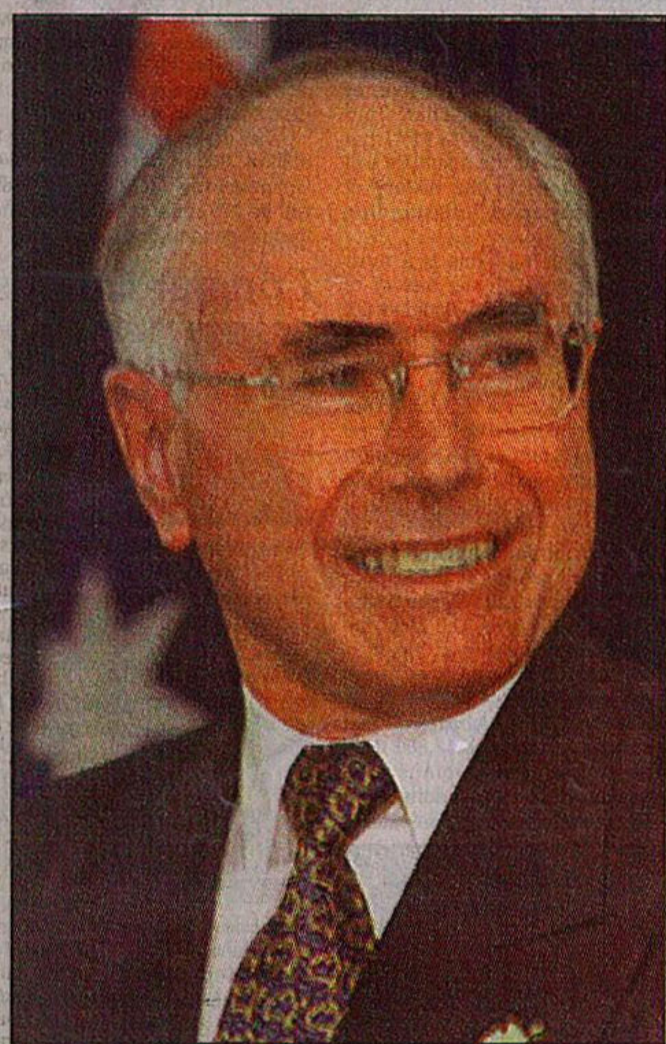
Australia Day



The Daily Star

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

JANUARY 29, 2005



John Howard MP
Prime Minister of Australia

MESSAGE

ON Australia Day, we celebrate the Australian achievement and recommit ourselves to preserving this nation's precious gifts of liberty, opportunity, fairness and mateship. As many new citizens pledge their loyalty to Australia and its people, we are also reminded of our distinctive blend of diversity and unity.

Wherever Australians gather -- in parks, at the beach, or just at home in the back year -- this is a day to reflect on what being an Australian means to each of us. It is a day to recognise extraordinary individual achievements that inspire hope and optimism in our national story. And a day to reaffirm our mutual obligations to each other, not least to those of our fellow countrymen faced with adversity and disadvantage.

The drive, resilience and adaptability of the Australian people are wellsprings of our nation's progress. When not overdone, our capacity for self-criticism, too, is a source of strength and renewed idealism.

Australia today is one of the world's most successful societies because of these characteristics. They allow us to approach the future with confidence in the knowledge that we can shape our own destiny.

Australia Day, above all, is a time to take pride in the many things we get right.

Australia's origin and people

AUSTRALIA, the sixth largest nation in land mass, is one of the world's most successful multicultural societies. Its relatively small population originates from more than 140 different nations encompassing all the major religions, culture and traditions of the world. It has a population of 20 million and it is one of the world's most urbanized countries, with about 70 per cent of the population living in its ten largest cities. Australia is the only nation to govern an entire continent and its outlying islands. The mainland is the largest island and the smallest, flattest continent on Earth.

Australia's national day, Australia Day, on 26 January, marks the date in 1788 when Captain Arthur Phillip, of the

British Royal Navy, commanding a fleet of 11 ships, sailed into Port Jackson (Sydney Cove). Phillip formally took possession of the eastern part of the continent for England and established a settlement, now Australia's largest city, Sydney.

Melbourne, Sydney, Perth, Adelaide and Brisbane appeared in the top ten of a recent survey conducted by the Economist Intelligence Unit, which rated cities against factors such as health and safety, infrastructure, culture and environment. Today Australia's lifestyle reflects its mainly Western origins, but Australia is a multicultural society, which has been enriched by six million settlers (almost 30% the total population) including 600,000 refugees.

A competitive business location

OVER the past 15 years Australia has undergone an economic revolution and is today one of the world's most open, stable and reliable economies, with higher growth and low inflation. Trade with the rest of the world is Australia's economic lifeblood. Australia ranks about 19th in the world in value of its international trade. The government's multi-faceted trade policy has as its main goal the creation of new and more open markets for exports. This goal is pursued at every level: multilaterally through the World Trade Organization; regionally through APEC and the Closer Economic Partnership with ASEAN and bilaterally through the free trade negotiations, such as with Singapore, Thailand and the United States and efforts to expand markets and address market barriers in a range of countries.

Australia's export structures have changed considerably over the past ten years. Although trade in commodities remains strong, new services and sophisticated manufacturing export markets have emerged. These diverse range of exports have made Australia the fourth largest economy in the Asia Pacific region. Australia is no longer a resource based economy and has not been so for the past ten years. The shift towards a knowledge based economy can be seen through Australia's rapid expansion of service industries and IT industries.

Australia offers an exciting range of advantages as a business and investment location, including:

- Open, robust economy forecast for continued growth
- Low inflation and low interest rates
- Well managed fiscal and monetary policies
- Committed and stable workforce and a low rate of industrial disputes
- Multilingual, highly educated and skilled, computer-literate labour force
- Cost-competitive location with competitive wages, high labour productivity, low property and construction costs
- An open and efficient regulatory environment? Sizeable domestic markets and strong links to the Asia-Pacific region

Did you know?

According to the KPMG survey 2004 Competitive Alternatives, Australia ranks second behind Canada for business cost competitiveness. The cost of setting up a business in Australia is also about eight or nine percent cheaper than the US.

Offering educational excellence for international students

AUSTRALIA is an internationally recognised source of high quality education and research excellence. The international standard

universities, colleges, schools and vocational training institutes make Australia one of the top three English speaking destinations for international students. Over a period of ten years from 1994 to 2003, nearly 1.7 million international students from 200 countries enrolled in Australian institutions to pursue goals of higher education.

Bangladesh the 12th ranked source of international students for Australia. In 2004, there was a record 6,500 student enrolments from Bangladesh at Australia's education institutions - marking a 30 percent increase in the number of enrolments in 2003. Of these, 3,400 were higher education enrolments at 40 Australian universities. The rest took advantage of Australia's internationally reputed vocational education institutions and English language colleges. This indicates that the people to people linkages between Australia and Bangladesh are certain to strengthen in the future and also reflects the strong bilateral relationship that exists between the two countries.

The students from Bangladesh were also joined by another 320,000 international students at the 1,200

Australian education institutions offering courses for international students. The students chose Australia to be their study destination as they recognised the wide variety of opportunities which the first class facilities for teaching, training and research facilities provide. These facilities include sophisticated laboratories, classrooms, computer centres and libraries and the world-wide reputation of an Australian education qualification.

Australia provides the added advantage in that it enjoys one of the highest standards of living in the world at a relatively lower cost. Australian education is also highly competitive when the costs of other popular study destinations are compared. Australian Government offers international students unique protections through its Education Services for Overseas Students Act. That legislation requires the registration of each and every course and institution open to international students applying for a student visa and protects the tuition fees paid by those students. Students are guaranteed of acquiring a recognised Australian qualification from a fully accredited Australian education institution.

MESSAGE

AUSTRALIA Day in 2005 celebrates the pride and freedom of the Australian people. A survey of Australians this week identified "our freedom", "our willingness to help others", and "our cultural diversity" as the three key points on which Australia's national identity rests. This year two in three Australians will celebrate Australia Day as a coming together to reflect on our nation's past, present and future.

On this special day for Australia, I extend my best wishes to fellow Australians residing in Bangladesh. I would also like to express good wishes to the Government and the people of Bangladesh as they move forward to meet the challenges of 2005.

During the past year we have witnessed an enhancement of the Australia Bangladesh relationship particularly in the economic sphere. In January we saw the launch of the Australia Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ABCCI) which is already playing an important role in facilitating markets in each country. The successful Bangladesh Festival in Sydney in April was opened by Hon. Commerce Minister Ataf Chowdhury and Australia's Trade Minister Mark Vaile. A range of senior official visits were facilitated during the year. Minister Chowdhury was accompanied by a delegation of around 70 Bangladeshi businesspeople.

The strong people-to-people links between Australia and Bangladesh find history in the Commonwealth and in cricket, in the Bangladesh community living in Australia, and the Australian community living in Bangladesh. Australia and Bangladesh have similar education, legal and commercial systems, and are working together to strengthen these links. Australia's Bangladeshi-born community about 15,000 contributes to the economic and social life of Australia.

Australia's cricket excellence continues to assist Bangladesh through coach and umpire education and a strategic skills training program. Bangladesh's win in the 2004 Under 19 Cricket World Cup, and at the national team level in the recent one day and test series against Zimbabwe is testament to the success of this program.

Bangladesh's improving economic fundamentals and an increasingly liberalized economy has ensured continued growth for many years. Australia as a development partner with Bangladesh since its Independence, 33 years ago - continues to support Bangladesh's efforts to reduce poverty and promote good governance through targeted interventions. Our development partnership particularly focuses on supporting Bangladesh to reduce nutritional vulnerability (through food aid); improve the quality of primary education (as a partner in Primary Education Development Program PEDP-II, a government-led, multi-donor initiative); increase access to safe drinking water (through arsenic mitigation); inform public health

policy (through health research on HIV/AIDS and other health issues); develop human resources (through Australian Development Scholarships); and raise awareness about human rights.

In this highly globalized and increasingly integrated world, Australia and Bangladesh are cooperating on encouraging good governance, promoting democracy, respecting the individual and working to ensure equality before the law. Together with other countries in the region, we continue to face the transnational challenges of people smuggling, money laundering, drug smuggling, and access to clean water, environmental degradation, security of reliable energy sources and prevention of diseases such as HIV/AIDS that all pose new threats to sovereignty and security. These values are strongly demonstrated through national contributions to peace, stability and democracy in our region such that each and every free nation is globally and regionally a full participant in the war against terrorism. Australia is pleased to work with Bangladesh in this context.

There is no doubt that the many Bangladeshis who have chosen to settle in Australia have contributed greatly to the development of strong relations between Australia and Bangladesh. The number of Bangladeshi students choosing Australia to further their education is increasing. Our lifestyle and favourable climate, and a combination of factors such as lower living costs and student fees (compared to other English-speaking destinations) and consistently high quality education, have made Australia a favourite destination among Bangladeshi students. The number of applications from Bangladeshi students to study in Australia increased by 54% during the 2003-04 year, while total student visa grants across all countries increased by only 5.5%. The Australian Government operates an overseas student program that is universal and open to all genuine students. All applicants must satisfy a set of strict objective criteria assessing their English language proficiency, educational achievement and financial capacity, as well as other legislative requirements.

Australian Government is also making it easier for skilled overseas students to remain in Australia after completing their courses. There are new migration options to encourage skilled graduates to settle and work in regional Australia, outside the major capital cities. While many Bangladeshis are taking up these new options, here in Bangladesh we are also seeing large communities of graduates returning home with a special understanding, high regard and often a strong affection for Australia.

Australian merchandise exports to Bangladesh food and manufacturers continue to increase. However, Australia's award of duty free and quota free access for Bangladeshi products in 2003 has not led to

increased exports to Australia. With the phasing out of the Multi Fibre Agreement, and the need for Bangladesh to diversify markets and products Australia remains a good potential market for Bangladeshi products.

Australian companies continue to be engaged in Bangladesh. Westfarmers Kleenheat Gas import, storage and bottling facility distributes LP Gas throughout the country. Australian services exports to Bangladesh have increased over the past year, and are set to improve further, especially the increasing Bangladeshi student numbers in Australia. Australia's SMEC International Pty Ltd has provided high quality engineering consultancy services in Bangladesh for 27 years, and joins other Australian mining related contractors and Bangladeshi companies in providing support to the Asia Energy Corporation (Bangladesh) Pty Ltd in its coal mining and exploration activities in Phulbari. A range of other companies are also engaging in Bangladesh.

On the world stage Australia and Bangladesh continue to work together to encourage greater trade flows and to remove market distortions, through the Doha round of trade negotiations in the World Trade Organization. Australia and Bangladesh are also committed to encouraging regional trade liberalization and are working together to achieve a greater degree of trade cooperation between the countries of the Indian Ocean through the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC).

Australia's relations with Bangladesh are built on strong foundations. As members of the international community, both countries cooperate closely on matters of mutual interest in organizations such as the United Nations, the Commonwealth and in other multilateral fora.

I would like to reiterate my good wishes to the Government and the people of Bangladesh for the coming year, a year in which I am confident our bilateral relations will reach new heights.



Lorraine Barker
High Commissioner for Australia in Bangladesh

Our warmest felicitations to the Government and People of Australia on the occasion of Australia Day



Heartiest Felicitations on Australia Day

Australian Centre for Education
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Our warmest felicitations to the friendly Government and people of Australia on the occasion of "Australia Day"

- Mashud & Brothers
- Uni-Trade
- Modern Export Import Pvt Ltd
- Modern Hatchery Ltd

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Asia Energy Corporation (Bangladesh) Pty Ltd.