



PRIME MINISTER

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JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, you left Canberra hopeful of opening all sorts of doors for Australian business on this trip. Have you succeeded?

PM: Yes, in each of the countries we've been. In the Republic of Korea and Thailand and Pakistan and India without any question there are very very many more opportunities now. In fact, during the course of the visit specific contracts have been signed and accelerated even beyond the expectations that we had when we left.

JOURNALIST: You were critical of Australian businessmen in Thailand for not making advantage of the window of opportunity that they had. Do you think that this visit is going to make them do so or are they going to fall back into bad old habits?

PM: I think that this will have a useful impact upon them. Certainly those who've been with us on the trip, the businessmen, have seen the opportunities that are there. The fortunate thing is that in all of these countries, and particularly here, including in India, we've got the impetus from the top. My counterpart in each of the countries that I've visited is equally committed as I am to the stimulation of the trading relationship between our two countries. So it won't be a transient thing at the Australian level. Our impetus will remain and in each of these countries from the Prime Minister down through the bureaucracy, I think there now is a commitment to enhancing the relationship. So the opportunity is there for Australian businessmen in each of these countries. There is growth in each of them, economic growth, growing population, and in each of these countries the opportunity not only of the substantial market of the countries themselves but as a base for the regions around them. Very great opportunities.

JOURNALIST: Considering the competition that we've got though from Japan and the United States, do you think we're up to it, we can do it?

PM: I don't think we have to speculate about that. Take the case here in India with the contract that we were seeking for the significant development of the Seabird naval project here. We had tough competition from that, the French, and we've beaten them. So we should because we're better.

JOURNALIST: Has that been confirmed?

PM: I think you'll find that we're there.

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